

# The Muslim Sunrise

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"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

## Peace



## The Path to Peace

*Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>(aba)</sup>, Khalifatul Masih V*  
Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. Pg.7



# The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

**T**he Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 195 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah..



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allahu anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

[www.muslimsunrise.com](http://www.muslimsunrise.com)



AHMADIYYA  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

*Muslims who believe in the Messiah,  
Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani*



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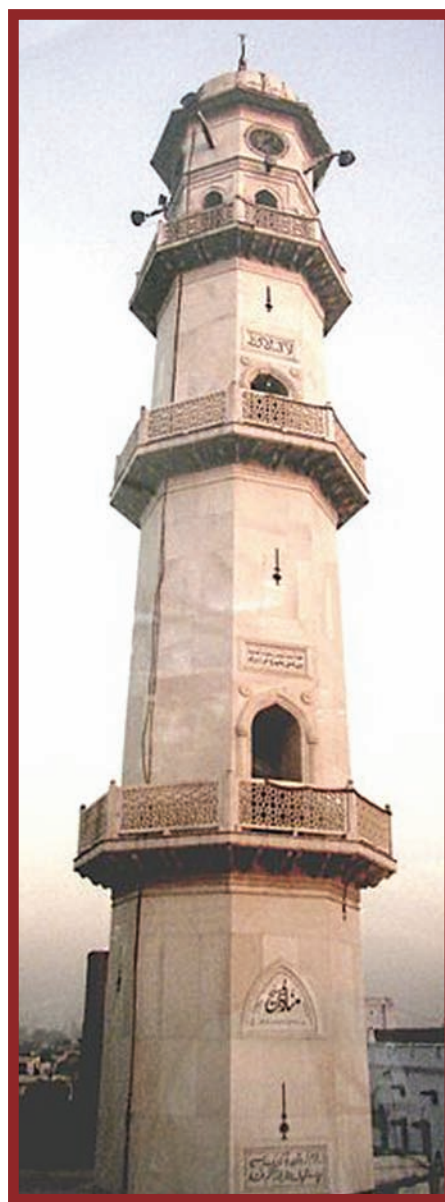
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## From the Holy Quran

*Chapter 13, Surah Al-Ra'd , Ayat 29*

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ  
اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ۝٢٩

**“Those who believe,  
and whose hearts  
find comfort in the  
remembrance of  
Allah. Aye! it is in  
the remembrance  
of Allah that hearts  
can find comfort.”**

## In the Words of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>

**T***o show signs of grace is the eternal way of God. But you can partake of this blessing only when there remains no difference and no distance between Him and you; only when all your wishes, hopes and desires merge into His will; only when at all times, in success or failure, in hope or disappointment, you remain in humble prostration at His door, so that He should do with you what He will. If you act like this, in you would appear that God, Who for a long time has kept His face concealed from the world.*

*Is there any among you, then, who would act upon this teaching, seeking only His pleasure, without the slightest sense of dissatisfaction against the way His will works?*

*Even in distress you should put your best foot forward, for this is the secret of your success; and you should strive to the utmost of your power to spread the idea of His singleness and unity all over the earth. Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His crea-*



*The Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi*

*“Alaysa Allaho be-Kafen Abdahoo”  
Is not God sufficient for His servant?*

*tures: do not oppress them with your tongue, or hands, or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind. Never unduly assert yourselves with pride over others, even those who are placed under you.*

*Never use abusive language for anyone, even though he abuse you. Be humble in spirit, kind and gentle, and forgiving, sympathetic towards all and wishing them well, so that you should be accepted. There are many who pretend to be kind, gentle and forgiving, but in their hearts they are serpents. You cannot be accepted*

*in the presence of the Lord unless you are pure, both on the outside and inside. If you are big, have mercy for those who are small-not contempt; if you are wise and well versed in learning serve the ignorant with words of wisdom, never desire to bring disgrace on their ignorance by trying to show off your own learning.*

*If you are rich, instead of treating them with self-centered disdainful pride, you should serve the poor. Beware of the paths of destruction. Fear the Lord, be righteous, do not fall in worship before the creation of God. Turn wholly and solely to Him, so that you lose interest in this world. Become entirely His, living wholly for His pleasure, for His sweet sake, hating everything impure and sinful; for indeed He is Holy.*

*Every morning should be a witness for you that you spent the night with righteousness and every evening should be a witness for you that you went through the day with the fear of God in your heart.*

*(Our Teachings, page 1 to 3) Go to Al-Islam. Org for full text of the book*



# Editorial

**E**stablishment of a permanent peace on earth is directly tied to the advent of the second coming of the Messiah. There are various prophecies that mention peace on earth after the coming of the Messiah in the Latter Days.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community believes that peace on earth will be established through the teachings and example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,<sup>sa</sup> as presented and interpreted for the need of our times by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian, who is the Promised Messiah.

The devastations of the worldwide calamities that have been inflicted upon humanity in the Latter Days cannot be solved by any human effort. The philosophers, scholars and gurus keep coming up with their remedies but every one of them has failed and are, at best, *band-aid* solutions. People all over the world are looking for protection against all sorts of afflictions and calamities and have become hopeless.

God spoke to Hadrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> and told him that He would be the Protector of everyone in his household. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> explained that his household includes everyone who is his follower and practicing his teachings. There is no other way. He is the light and the way in the Latter Days for protection and the final establishment of peace on earth.

Hadrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> explained his mission in the following words:

**“The purpose for which God has appointed me is that I should remove the malaise that afflicts the relationship between God and His creatures, and should restore the relationship of love and sincerity between them. Through the proclamation of truth I should bring about peace by putting an end to religious wars and should manifest the verities which have become hidden from the eyes of the world. I am called upon to demonstrate that spirituality, which has been overlaid by selfish darkness. It is for me to demon-**

**strate in practice and not only in words, the Divine attributes which penetrate into the hearts of people and are manifested through prayer and concentration. Most of all it is my purpose to plant once more in the hearts of people the pure and shining unity of God which is free from every suspicion of paganism and which has completely disappeared. All this will be accomplished not through my power, but through the Power of Him Who is the God of Heaven and earth.”**

**(P. 47 Lecture Lahore)**

In our view it is through following the principles taught in the Holy Qur'an which would bring the lasting peace on earth. The articles in the current issue address the various aspects of Islamic teachings that promote peace with God and our fellow beings. We hope and pray that sooner than later the world would come to the realization for its own good that peace is only attainable through following the Messiah of our times.

# The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations

*Address by Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>(aba)</sup>, Khalifatul Masih V*

Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.

*June 27, 2012*

*Assalamo alaikum wa  
rahmatullahe wa barakatohu,*

*All distinguished guests*

*(Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all)*

**B**efore proceeding, I would like to first of all take this opportunity to thank all of you for taking the time to come and listen to what I have to say. I have been requested to speak about a subject that is extremely vast and wide ranging. It has many different aspects and therefore it is not possible for me to cover all of them in the short time available.

And the subject that I have been asked to speak about is the establishment of world peace. Certainly this is the most vital and pressing issue facing the world today. However, as the time is limited, I shall only briefly give the Islamic viewpoint on the establishment of peace through just and equal relations between nations.

The truth is that peace and justice are inseparable – you cannot have one without the other. And certainly this principle is something that all wise and intelligent people understand. Leaving aside those people who are determined to create disorder in the world, no one can ever claim that in any society, country or even the entire world, that there can be disorder or a lack of peace, where justice and fair dealing exists.



Nevertheless, we find that in many parts of the world disorder and a lack of peace are prevalent.

And such disorder is visible both internally within countries, and externally in terms of the relations between various nations. Such disorder and strife exists even though all governments claim to make policies that are based on justice. And all claim that the establishment of peace is their primary objective.

Yet, in general, there is little doubt that restlessness and anxiety is increasing in the world and so disorder is spreading. This clearly proves that somewhere along the line, the requirements of justice are not being fulfilled. Therefore there is an urgent need to try and end inequality, wherever and whenever it exists.

And so as the worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I would like to make a few observations about the need for, and the ways to achieve peace based on

justice. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a purely religious community.

It is our firm belief that the Messiah and Reformer who was destined to appear in this age and enlighten the world as to Islam's true teachings has indeed arrived. We believe that the Founder of our Community, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, was that very Promised Messiah and Reformer, and thus we have accepted him.

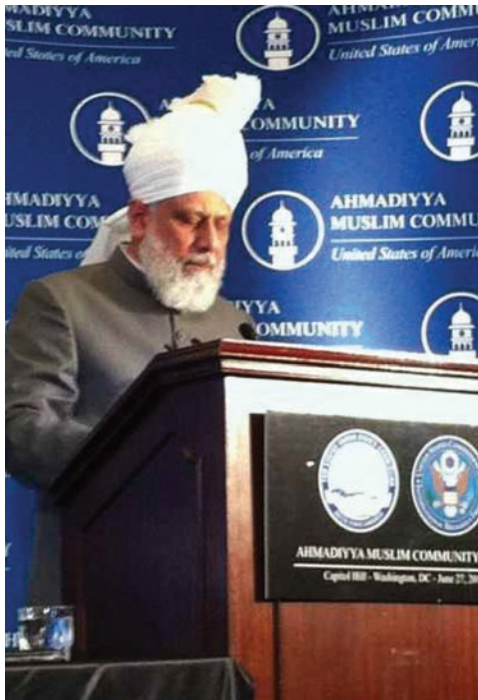
Based on his teachings, we act upon and propagate the real and true teachings of Islam that are based on the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, everything that I will say in relation to establishing peace and in relation to conducting just international relations, will be based on Quranic teachings.

In relation to achieving world peace, all of you regularly express your opinions and indeed make great efforts. Your creative and intelligent minds allow you to present great ideas, plans and indeed a vision of peace. Thus this issue does not require me to speak from a worldly or political perspective, but instead my entire focus will be based on how to establish peace based on religion.

And for this purpose I shall, as I have said, present some very important guidelines based on the teachings of the Holy Quran. It is important to always remember that human knowledge and intellect is not perfect, but is in fact limited. Thus when making decisions or forming thoughts, often certain factors enter human minds, which can cloud judgment and lead to a person trying to fulfil his own rights.

Ultimately, this can lead to an unjust outcome and decision being made. However God's Law is perfect and so no vested interests or unfair provisions exist. This is because God only desires for the good and betterment of His Creation and therefore His Law is based entirely on justice.

The day the people of the world come to recognize and understand this crucial point, will be the day that the foundation for true and everlasting peace will be laid. Otherwise we



**Nations and governments should always seek to serve and help those less fortunate. However such service should not be rendered with an aim of achieving national or political benefits or as a means to fulfill vested interests. We find that in the past six or seven decades the United Nations has launched many programs or foundations aiming to help the poor countries to progress.**

continue to find that although efforts are endlessly made to establish world peace, yet they are unable to provide any worthwhile results.

After the conclusion of the First World War, the leaders of certain countries desired for good and peaceful relations between all nations in future. Thus in an effort to achieve world peace the '*League of Nations*' was formed.

Its principle aim was to maintain world peace and to prevent future wars from breaking out. Unfortunately, the rules of the League and the Resolutions it passed had certain flaws and weaknesses and so they did not properly protect the rights of *all* peoples and *all* nations equally. And so one by one countries began to withdraw from the League.

And so as a result of the inequalities that existed, long term peace could not prevail. The efforts of the League failed and this led directly to World War II. We are all well aware of the unparalleled destruction and devastation that ensued, where around 75 million people globally lost their lives, many of whom were innocent civilians.

That war should have been more than enough to open the eyes of the world. It should have been a means to developing wise policies that granted all parties their due rights, based on justice and thus prove to be a means of establishing peace in the world.

The world's governments at the time did endeavor to some extent to try and establish peace and hence the United Nations was established. However, it soon became quite apparent, that the noble and overarching

objective underpinning the United Nations, could not be fulfilled.

Indeed today, certain governments, quite openly make statements that prove its failure. What does Islam say in relation to international relations that are based on justice, and so a means of establishing peace?

In chapter 49, verse 14 of the Holy Quran, God Almighty has made it clear that whilst our nationalities or ethnic backgrounds act as a means of identity, they do not entitle or validate any form of superiority of any kind. The Quran thus makes clear that all people are born equal.

Furthermore, in the final sermon ever delivered by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) he instructed all Muslims to always remember that an Arab is not superior to a non-Arab and nor is a non-Arab superior to an Arab. And he taught that a white person is not superior to a black person and nor is a black person superior to a white person.

Thus, it is a clear teaching of Islam that the people of all nationalities and all races are equal. And it is also made clear that all people should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice. This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation for harmony between different groups and nations and for the establishment of peace.

However today we find that there is division and separation between powerful and weaker nations. For example, in the United Nations we find that there is a distinction made between certain countries.

Thus in the Security Council there are some permanent members and some non-permanent members. This division has proved to be an internal source of anxiety and frustration and thus we regularly hear reports of certain countries protesting against this inequality.

Islam teaches absolute justice and equality in all matters and so we find another very crucial guideline in chapter 5, verse 3 of the Holy Quran. In this verse it states that to fully comply with the requirements of justice, it is necessary to treat even those people, who go beyond all limits in their hatred and enmity, with fairness and equity.

And the Quran teaches that wherever and whoever counsels you towards goodness and virtue, you should accept it. And wherever and whoever counsels you towards sinful or unjust behaviour, you should reject it.

A question that naturally arises is that what is the standard of justice required by Islam? In chapter 4, verse 136, the Holy Quran states that even if you have to testify against yourself or your parents or your most loved ones, then you must do so in order to uphold justice and to uphold the truth. Powerful and rich countries should not usurp the rights of the poor and weaker countries, in an effort to preserve their own rights, and nor should they deal with the poorer nations in an unjust fashion.

On the other hand, the poor and weaker nations should not seek to inflict harm on the powerful or wealthy nations, whenever the opportunity arises. Instead, both sides should endeavor to fully abide by the principles of justice and indeed this is a matter of crucial



importance in maintaining peaceful relations between countries.

Another requirement for peace between nations based on justice is given in chapter 15, verse 89 of the Holy Quran where it states that no party should ever look enviously at the resources and wealth of others. And similarly no country should seek to unjustly appropriate or take over the resources of another country on the false pretext of trying to assist or support them.

Thus on the basis of providing technical expertise, governments should not take advantage of other nations, by making unjust trade deals or contracts. And similarly, on the basis of providing expertise or assistance, governments should not try to take control of the natural resources or assets of the developing nations. Where less educated people or governments need to be taught how to properly utilize their natural resources, then this should be done.

Nations and governments should always seek to serve and help those less fortunate. However such service should not be rendered with an aim of achieving national or political benefits or as a means to fulfill vested interests. We find that in the past six or seven decades the United Nations has launched many programs or foundations aiming to help the poor countries to progress.

Towards this effort they have explored the natural resources of the developing nations. However despite these efforts, none of the poorer countries have reached the stage or level of the developed nations. One reason for this is certainly wide-ranging corruption by many of the governments of those poor nations.

With regret though, I must say that as a means to further their own interests, the developed nations have continued to deal with such governments. Trade deals, international aid and business contracts have continued to be processed. And as a result, the frustrations and restlessness of the poor and deprived segments of society have continued to increase and this has led to rebellion and internal disorder within those countries.

The poor people of the developing countries have become so frustrated that they have turned against not only their own leaders but also the Western powers as well. This has played into the hands of the extremist groups, who have taken advantage of the frustrations,

and so have been able to encourage such people towards joining their groups and supporting their hate filled ideology.

And the ultimate result of this has been that the peace of the world has been destroyed. Islam has drawn our attention to the means for peace: It requires absolute justice. It requires truthful testimony to always be given. It requires that our glances are not cast enviously in the direction of the wealth of other. And it requires that the developed nations, put aside their own vested interests, and instead help and serve the less developed and poorer nations with a truly selfless attitude and spirit.

If all of these factors are observed then



true peace will be established. Remember, where injustice occurs there can never be peace. And so if a country transgresses all limits and attacks another country and seeks to unjustly take control of its resources, then other countries should certainly take measures to stop such cruelty.

But they should always act with justice when doing so. The circumstances for taking action, based on Islamic teachings, are detailed in chapter 49, verse 10 of the Quran. It teaches that where two nations are in dispute and this leads to war, then other governments should strongly counsel them towards dialogue and diplomacy so that they can come to an agreement and reconciliation on the basis of a negotiated settlement.

However if one of the parties does not accept the terms of agreement and wages war, then other countries should unite together and fight to stop that aggressor. When the aggressive nation is defeated and he agrees to mutual negotiation, then all parties should work towards an agreement which leads to long-standing peace and reconciliation.

Harsh and unjust conditions should not be enforced that lead to the hands of any nation being tied, because in the long term that will lead to restlessness which will ferment and spread. And the result of such restlessness will be further disorder. In circumstances where a third-party government seeks to bring about reconciliation between two parties, then it should act with sincerity and total impartiality.

And this impartiality should remain even if one of the parties speaks against it and so the third party should display no anger in such circumstances and should seek no revenge or act in an unfair manner. All parties should be afforded their due rights. Thus for the

requirements of justice to be fulfilled, it is essential that the countries who are negotiating a settlement, should themselves not seek to fulfil their own personal interests or to try and derive benefit unduly from either country.

They should not interfere unjustly or pressure either of the parties unfairly. The natural resources of any country should not be taken advantage of. Unnecessary and unfair restrictions should not be placed upon such countries. Because this is neither just and nor can it ever prove to be a source of

improving relations between countries.

Due to time constraints, I have mentioned these points only very briefly. In short, if we desire peace to be established in the world, then we must leave aside our personal and national interests for the greater good and instead we must establish mutual relations that are based entirely on justice.

Otherwise, as all of you are also aware, that due to the many alliances and blocs that exist, it is not unlikely that disorder will continue to increase in the world, which will ultimately lead to huge destruction.

The effects of such devastation and warfare will surely last for many generations. And so the United States, as the world's largest power, should play its role in acting with true justice and with such good intentions as I have described. If it does so then the world will always remember with great admiration your great efforts. It is my prayer that this hope becomes a reality.

*Thank you very much.*

# Attaining an Elusive International Peace

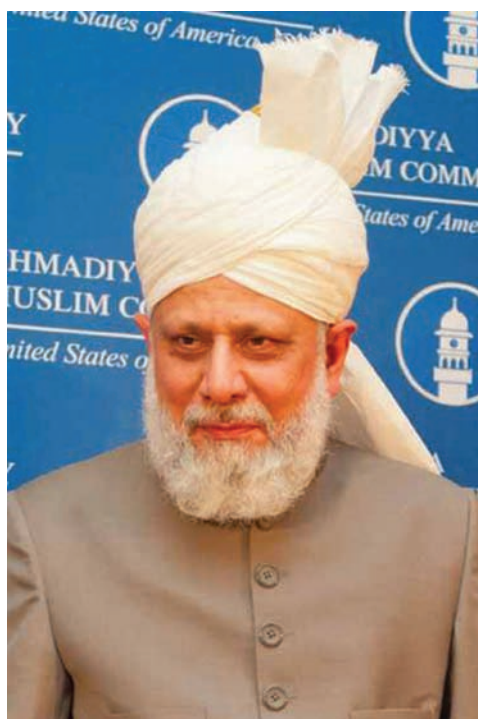
By Naveed A. Malik

**Promotion of international peace is a central objective of the United Nations Organization (UNO) and foreign ministries around the world. Yet despite relentless, well-intentioned efforts of the diplomatic corps—and countless UN programs—world peace has eluded mankind in the modern era. Indeed, mankind has been enmeshed in a perpetual state of war for the past century.**

**A**gainst this backdrop, on June 27, 2012, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>aba</sup>, the Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, delivered a historic address at Capitol Hill, entitled, “The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations.” This article will extract the many points of guidance from this address.

## Non-Discrimination

Referencing history, His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> astutely observed that institutional discrimination—a blatant form of injustice—led to the collapse of the League of Nations, and World War II. Hope was then invested in the UNO, but His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> said peace remains elusive. One reason, His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> asserted,



*“And it is also made clear [in Islam] that all people should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice. This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation for harmony between different groups and nations and for the establishment of peace.”*

is institutional discrimination, the abolition of which will promote international peace.

His Holiness said that the Holy Qur’an (49:14) teaches that while our nationalities and ethnicities exist for the purpose of identifying one another, it does not entitle anyone to claim superiority over another. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> emphasized this point in his Farewell Sermon, saying that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, and vice versa; and that a white person is not superior to a black person, and vice versa. His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> expounded:

“And it is also made clear [in Islam] that all people should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice. This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation for harmony between different groups and nations and for the establishment of peace.”

His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> then juxtaposed the principle of non-discrimination—one which multilateral institutions agree with, in theory—with the distinction made within the UNO between certain countries, citing the example of permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as “an internal source of anxiety and frustration.”

## Absolute Justice For All

Beyond simple non-discrimination, His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> explained that the Holy Quran “states that to fully comply with the requirements of justice, it is necessary to treat even those people, who go beyond all limits in their hatred and enmity, with fairness and equity” (3:5). This concept, of absolute justice, is called ‘*adl*’ in the Holy Quran, and should be implemented equally for all.

His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> added two related lessons from the Holy Quran on behaving justly:

1. Wherever and whoever counsels you towards goodness and virtue, you should accept it.
2. Wherever and whoever counsels you towards sinful or unjust behavior, you should reject it.

Islam, His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> explained, requires the highest standard of justice: “In chapter 4,

verse 136, the Holy Quran states that even if you have to testify against yourself or your parents or your most loved ones, then you must do so in order to uphold justice and to uphold the truth.”

## Relations Between Powerful and Weak Countries

Non-discrimination and absolute justice are principles, when applied to international relations, lead to respectful treatment between all countries—rich and poor, powerful and weak alike. His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> counseled rich and powerful nations to “not usurp the rights of the poor and weaker countries, in an effort to preserve their own rights.” Similarly, “poor and weaker nations should not seek to inflict harm on the powerful or wealthy nations, whenever the opportunity arises.”

His Holiness<sup>aba</sup>, citing the Holy Quran (89:15), counseled that in regards to international trade, “no party should ever look enviously at the resources and wealth of others.” This principle works in both directions—i.e. rich countries should not exploit resources of poor countries, and poor countries should not covet the rich, thereby digging themselves into a deeper and deeper national debt.

“Thus on the basis of providing technical expertise,” His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> explained, “governments should not take advantage of other nations, by making unjust trade deals or contracts. Where less educated people or governments need to be taught how to properly utilize their natural resources, then this should be done. Nations and governments should always seek to serve and help those less fortunate. However, such service should not be rendered with an aim of achieving national or political benefits or as a means to fulfill vested interests.”

## Anti-Corruption

His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> lamented that the UNO, and powerful countries within it, continue to strike trade deals, deliver international aid to, and process business contracts with corrupt regimes in the developing world.

“And as a result, the frustrations and restlessness of the poor and deprived segments of society have continued to increase and this has led to rebellion and internal disorder within those countries. The poor people of the devel-

oping countries have become so frustrated that they have turned against not only their own leaders but also the Western powers as well. This has played into the hands of the extremist groups, who have taken advantage of the frustrations, and so have been able to encourage such people towards joining their groups and supporting their hate-filled ideology. And the ultimate result of this has been that the peace of the world has been destroyed.”

A key lesson from His Holiness’s<sup>aba</sup> address, then, is that corruption should be rooted out—not just through documents like the UN Convention against Corruption—but through the exercise of powerful nations’ prerogatives to stipulate pragmatic reforms, or refuse to deal with (and thus empower) corrupt regimes. Furthermore, it cannot be overemphasized that His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> linked the appeal of violent extremist groups to government corruption—the rooting out of the latter will most certainly reduce the former.

## Securing the Peace

His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> reminded the audience - which included numerous members of the diplomatic corps, uniformed military, as well as 30 members of the U.S. Congress - “where injustice occurs there can never be peace.”

And to be sure, there are many places in the world which are bereft of peace—be it national, social, economic, political or individual. In this vein, His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> spoke about securing the peace.

Citing the Holy Quran (49:10), he advised representatives of the greatest military power in the history of mankind, “if a country transgresses all limits and attacks another country and seeks to unjustly take control of its resources, then other countries should certainly take measures to stop such cruelty.”

Turning his attention to the defeated aggressor, His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> said, “harsh and unjust conditions should not be enforced that lead to the hands of any nation being tied, because in the long term that will lead to restlessness which will ferment and spread. And the result of such restlessness will be further disorder.”

At this, one cannot help but remember the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s<sup>sa</sup> Victory of Mecca. Marching on Mecca with 10,000 companions, he confronted a people who for 13 long years, which he was a resident of the city, tortured him, his family and companions mer-

cilessly. They did unspeakable things—like one woman eating the liver of his uncle—and yet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> granted clemency to all. This sort of benevolence may not satiate a blood lust, but as the Victory of Mecca illustrates, it is almost always the path to a lasting peace.

## Honest Brokering of Peace Negotiations

Often a developed nation, respected by both the international community and the parties embroiled in conflict, is chosen to arbitrate between other countries. His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> advised:

“In circumstances where a third-party government seeks to bring about reconciliation between two parties, then it should act with sincerity and total impartiality. And this impartiality should remain even if one of the parties speaks against it and so the third party should display no anger in such circumstances and should seek no revenge or act in an unfair manner. All parties should be afforded their due rights.

“Thus for the requirements of justice to be fulfilled, it is essential that the countries who are negotiating a settlement, should themselves not seek to fulfill their own personal interests or to try and derive benefit unduly from either country. They should not interfere unjustly or pressure either of the parties unfairly.”

## The Role of the United States

His Holiness<sup>aba</sup> concluded by making mention of the U.S. “And so the United States, as the world’s largest power, should play its role in acting with true justice and with such good intentions as I have described. If it does so then the world will always remember with great admiration your great efforts. It is my prayer that this hope becomes a reality.”

Indeed the United States, through its many foreign policy entities, is working towards the promotion of international peace. By heeding the words of His Holiness<sup>aba</sup>, however, we can accelerate and improve upon those efforts, so that one day soon we can attain that elusive world peace, founded upon absolute justice and equality, *insha’Allah*.



# The Islamic principle of absolute justice: A remedy for world and social peace

*“Indeed, Allah requires you to abide by justice, to treat with grace and to give like the giving of kin to kin.” (Holy Quran, 16:91)*

By Nadia Qazi

In citing this Qur’anic verse, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV<sup>th</sup> reminds us in his work, *Absolute Justice, Kindness, and Kinship: The Three Creative Principles*, that exercising justice is not the only requirement for achieving world peace. Rather, we must also temper our justice with benevolence and then add *ita’l dhil-qurba*, which Khalifa IV<sup>th</sup> describes as “a spontaneous expression of love and care as experienced by a mother for her child.”<sup>1</sup>

In this sense, as he explains, three stages of human relations are set out. The least Allah requires from believers is absolute justice, but they cannot stop there. They must progress towards benevolence where they will learn the art of returning more than others are due, which, in Qur’anic terminology, is called *ihsan*. Finally, we are expected to extend our benevolence in such a way that there is no pride attached to it; that is, we consider it our duty and not a favor to others. In this sense, we are as gracious to one another as we will be with our own kindred.

The second part of the verse in question sheds more light on the issue. We are told in the Holy Quran:

“And He forbids indecency, manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonishes you, so that you may take heed,” (16:91).

All of the elements mentioned above are the exact polar opposites of justice, as night and day. We know that today, all of mankind’s ills are born from the lack of justice being carried out. As Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV<sup>th</sup> rightly points out, “Mankind stands in need of justice so desperately that if we do not teach justice to people in light of the Qur’anic teachings they will continue to wander astray, losing their way in a labyrinth of utter ignorance.”<sup>2</sup>

Human beings suffer the most at the hands of fellow human beings. All people should be granted equal rights without discrimination or prejudice. This guidance is based on the Qur’an, which emphasizes repeatedly that all



people are born equal. In Chapter 49, Verse 14 of the Quran, God Almighty has made it clear that while our nationalities and ethnic backgrounds serve as a means of identity, they do not entitle us to any form of superiority. Thus, we read in the Qur’an:

“O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Aware,” (49:14).

Yet, in spite of this beautiful teaching, we still find division, bigotry and prejudice between different groups and between stronger and weaker nations. This division has caused great anxiety, turmoil and conflict throughout the world.

In Chapter 5, Verse 3 of the Holy Quran, we read:

“And let not the enmity of a people, that they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque, incite you to transgress. And help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah; surely, Allah is severe in punishment,” (5:3).

This is a very crucial guideline in the Quran. It clearly states that in order to fully comply with the requirements of justice, it is necessary to treat with fairness and equity even those who go beyond all limits in their hatred and enmity. The Quran states that we should accept any counsel towards goodness and virtue, no matter where it comes from or who advises it. Likewise, we are told that no matter where it comes from or who counsels

us towards sinful and unjust behavior, we should reject it. And in Chapter 4, Verse 136 of the Holy Quran, we are told that even if you have to testify against yourself or your parents or your most loved ones, then you must do so in order to uphold the truth and ensure justice. This principle could be extended further, so that powerful and rich countries are not able to usurp the rights and resources of poor and weaker countries, and exploit them for their own political and economic interests. Similarly, poor and weaker nations should not seek gratuitous confrontation and belligerence against the powerful and wealthy nations simply to assert their independence. Everyone should instead adhere to justice, equity and integrity in order to promote peaceful coexistence among nations.

The fact of the matter is that peace and justice are inextricably linked, and you cannot have one without the other. They are completely inseparable. Yet, even while more countries are claiming to take up the cause of promoting peace and justice, disorder and chaos are spreading throughout the world. The Quran describes this situation in the following way:

“And when it is said to them: ‘Create not disorder on the earth,’ they say: ‘We are only promoters of peace.’ Beware! It is surely they who create disorder, but they do not perceive (it),” (2: 12-13).

Thus, in Islam and in its holy book, the Quran, we are given guidelines to achieve peace, which Khalifatul Masih V,<sup>aba</sup> Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, outlined in his address at the Capitol Hill on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

In his address, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aba</sup> stated that according to the Qur’anic teaching, we must exercise absolute justice, always give truthful testimony, and that our glances should not be cast enviously at the wealth of others. Developed nations must also put aside their own vested interests and instead help and serve the less developed or poorer nations with a truly selfless attitude and spirit. Indeed, the United States of America, as a superpower, should play a pivotal role in acting with true justice and noble intentions, otherwise, it is likely that disorder will continue to spread and engulf the whole world with catastrophic consequences.

The cataclysmic and shocking events of 9/11 are a case in point. By violently rejecting the sacred tenet of absolute justice, the followers of a militant and radical Islamic ideology precipitated untold misery, suffer-

ing and carnage. The shockwaves are still reverberating far and wide. It has been more than a decade since 9/11, and yet, the scars have yet to heal. As “Muslimericans,” we have all experienced firsthand the shift in the public perception of Islam from apathetic ignorance to distrust and outright hostility. The attacks unleashed so much hate and paranoia on both sides, and channeled the fear of the “Other” that resides in all of us, and allowed room for its expression. The attacks on 9/11 represent the current battle between moderates and extremists in the Muslim world—a battle that represents the soul of Islam itself. The rapid increase in terrorism and extremist ideology serve as a disquieting reminder that we are far from winning the “War on Terror.”

What happened on 9/11 is a microcosm of the worldwide schism between the rigid and intolerant extremists and the peace-loving moderates in the Islamic and Arab world. This struggle between two opposing factions has engulfed the Muslim world and remains the most notable politico-religious conflict in the Arab world today. Many succumb to the fiery indoctrination of a primitive and dogmatic Saudi-based Wahabi school of thought. Abject poverty, widespread illiteracy, and wretched hopelessness all play a role. Corruption, incompetence and criminal inertia plague the weak and oppressive governments. Many of these despotic rulers use the threat of Islamic extremism as an excuse for perpetuating their repressive and undemocratic regimes and draconian laws. They play a dangerous game of appeasement, exploitation, and suppression.

The poor, downtrodden masses, increasingly disillusioned, then turn to the religious leaders for meaningful answers and solutions. These radical leaders see the world in stark black and white, good and evil terms. To them, the West represents colonialism, hegemony, economic and political exploitation and materialism. The disaffected, angry, and vengeful zealots who choose a path of defiance, rebelliousness and violent insurgency thus swell the ranks of the extremists. The peaceful, moderate, “silent” majority may be too intimidated and disheartened to mount credible resistance.

The moderate majority of Muslims need not be cowed into submission. Their message of peace, tolerance, and coexistence is based on the teachings of the Holy Quran. Islam itself means “peace” and the universal Islamic greeting is “Peace be upon you.” Islam has a splendid centuries-old tradition and his-

tory of tolerance, respect for other faiths and cultures, and protection of minorities. The Quran teaches “to kill an innocent person is tantamount to killing the whole humanity”; “suicide is strictly forbidden”; “wars can be only waged in defense against those who have declared war against you,” and to “treat your enemies with justice and fairness.” There are hundreds of such commandments. The violent extremists are the ones who espouse a corrupted and distorted version of Islam.

This is, in essence, a clash within a civilization and within Islam. The final outcome of this struggle will have profound consequences not only for Muslims but also for all of mankind. How do we solve these refractory and frustrating problems that plague the Muslim world? How do we strengthen the ranks of the peace loving, moderate, beleaguered Muslims who are themselves falling prey to the vicious juggernaut of extremist, violent, radical Islam? How can we breathe new life into a region that has been marred by tarnished hopes and dreams, and a continuous struggle between the conservative and the contemporary, the old and the new? Has it really become, as Huntington suggested in “The Clash of Civilizations,” the “West versus the Rest?” Can we develop an alternative ideology, one that not only rejects radicalism and extremism but also does not view the world as a dichotomy between East and West, “Us versus Them?”

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, a community of Muslims who believe in the Messiah, does indeed present us with that alternative ideology, that pristine teaching which is in accordance with the guidance of Allah as set forth in the Holy Quran. We have in our community a firm dedication to the three creative principles of absolute justice, kindness, and kinship, best exemplified in our commitment to our motto of “Love for all, Hatred for None.” Through the unity provided to us through *Khilafat*, and through the guidance of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, we are able to forge new paths of progress towards world and social peace, in accordance with the guidance of the Holy Qur’an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>.

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#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad, Mirza Tahir. *Absolute Justice, Kindness, and Kinship —The Three Creative Principles.* Tilford, Surrey: Islam International Publications, Ltd., 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Paradise.

The word provokes a plethora of images, impressions, and sensations. For those who have known the pleasure of material wealth and for those who have not, it conjures up images of untold riches and innumerable comforts. For those whose views are more religious, the word's impressions are more likely sculpted by scripture: a land flowing with milk and honey, the Lord's Kingdom come, a garden beneath which rivers flow. And interestingly, for saints and secularists alike, the word likely stirs the same sensations of well-being and harmony, albeit achieved and experienced in different ways—achieved via compassion in the view of the former and justice in the view of the latter. But for all its varying and sometimes conflicting implications, the undercurrent of the word paradise remains singular throughout, the one and the same: Peace. How is this sense of peace to be achieved? Islam posits an extensive framework for achieving such a state of peace and paradise.

# The Rights of Neighbors



*‘And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbor that is a kinsman and the neighbor that is a stranger,’ (4:37).*

By: Rabia Munawar Mir

Karen Armstrong writes in her book “Islam: A Brief History” that Islam is an inherently political system because it envisions a society defined by social justice and therefore requires the application of certain rules to make its vision a reality.<sup>1</sup> According to Islam, people’s relations are governed by rights and obligations—rights of one’s own self and of others and obligations to oneself and to others.

Each relationship has its own scope of rights and obligations within the Islamic context. And each party within any relationship is urged to fulfill its obligations to the utmost, to grant the rights of others and to act with integrity in all relational spheres. But there is one specific sphere of mutual rights and obligations which although occupies a high stature in Islam, it is a relationship bound neither by the ties of blood nor by marriage but by the

ties of humanity. That is, the relationship to one’s neighbor. This essay will discuss the scope and breadth of the term neighbor as understood within the Islamic context, using the Quran and *ahadith*. It will then go on to analyze the Promised Messiah’s<sup>as</sup> call for peace in a modern, multicultural world, and how our treatment of our neighbors can either enable the existence of a peaceful paradise, or cause any Garden of Eden to fall from grace.

### The Holy Quran states:

‘And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbor *that is a kinsman and the neighbor that is a stranger*,’ (4:37).<sup>2</sup>

The apparent meaning is clear to all. Muslims are required to show kindness and regard to all stated relations. However, Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad’s<sup>ra</sup> commentary on the Quran offers a greater depth of field



**A neighbor is to be offered protection and support in his time of need, his rights are not to be violated under any circumstance, even if any such violation should be beneficial to a believer (“raise not your building to deprive him of air without his permission”), he is not to be terrorized and whether in good health or bad, he is to be offered a strong support from a believer.**

into its meaning of this verse. He writes that the verse preceding the one stated above, i.e. verse 36 of chapter 4 commands believers to be kind to their wives.<sup>3</sup> Verse 36 is then followed by the above verse. This progression, he writes, from the most intimate of relations i.e. one's spouse, to the most aloof of relations i.e. *the neighbor that is a stranger* is indicative not of a neighbor in the usual sense, but of a neighbor in humanity. He writes:

“After having enjoined in the previous verses that one should be kind to one's wife, in the present verse the Quran directs a Muslim to make his kindness so comprehensive as to include in its scope the whole of mankind, from parents who are the nearest, to strangers who are the furthest removed.”<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, taking care of one's nearby neighbors would foster and develop a healthy sense of community within neighborhoods, which in turn would facilitate an open, safe, and positive environment, wherein persons would look out for one another and care for one another. But the latter part of the verse, “the neighbor that is a stranger” broadens the scope of the meaning of neighbor. That is, the word does not only apply to people living in one's proximity. Instead, the word

is used broadly and only one's imagination and heart can impose a limit on the breadth of its meaning. For example, considering the global community in which we live and the information age which has facilitated communications between major cosmopolitan states and underdeveloped backwaters worldwide, is it not possible that the injunction regarding *neighbors who are strangers* applies to persons whom we have never met, nor will we ever meet, but whom we have the power to help by means of our wealth, knowledge, and relative political strength? And if, as citizens of nation-states, we considered neighboring nation-states as those who fall into the sphere of this far-reaching injunction, could we not envision a global community in the true sense of the word, wherein we are obligated to provide for and support one another rather than undercut one another for resources in the name of power and politics? If this injunction could be applied in its true sense at both the micro and macro levels, is it not possible, even likely, that the Qur'anic vision of brotherhood between all mankind could be fulfilled? Indeed. If the Islamic scope of the word neighbor could be understood and effectively applied in its true spirit, then peace could be

achieved, both within nations and between nations. Thus, the Islamic commandment of kindness to neighbors is limited neither by proximity nor by acquaintance, but bears the purpose of bringing together people from all walks of life and all across the globe, beneath the cloak of mutual mercy and kindness.

Such mutual mercy and kindness is apparent in the example of Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> always practised utmost kindness and consideration towards all people, even towards his enemies. He fulfilled all the obligations due from him towards all his relations, whether they were personal or otherwise. In regards to neighbors, there are several *ahadith* which underscore their entitlement to respect and kindness. For example,

“Help your neighbour, if he seeks help; give him a loan if he asks for a loan; give him relief if he is needy; nurse him if he falls ill; follow his coffin if he dies; cheer him if he meets any good; sympathise with him if any calamity befalls him; raise not your building so as to deprive him of air without his permission; harass him not.” (Kamil Ibne Adi)

“One whose neighbor is not safe at his hands shall not enter Paradise.” (Muslim)

These *ahadith*, while seemingly self-explanatory, offer a great insight into the Islamic philosophy of establishing and maintaining social peace. Islam relies on a form of social justice that is achieved not necessarily through the force of law, but through the incentives and checks produced by mutual conduct and espouses the highest standard of social justice and cohesion not through mere theoretical discourse, but by placing the burden of action upon believers. Muslims are told that paradise can be achieved on earth if they behave with compassion and justice with one another. The above *ahadith*, if analyzed in light of Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad's<sup>ra</sup> interpretation of the previously stated Qu'ranic verse, further underscore the beautiful Islamic teachings regarding one's local community and one's general relation to humanity. A neighbor is to be offered protection and support in his time of need, his rights are not to be violated under any circumstance, even if any such violation should be beneficial to a believer (“raise not your building to deprive him of air without his permission”), he is not to be terrorized and whether in good health or bad, he is to be offered a strong support from a believer. Now consider, that if one was truly to act upon these injunctions, if each individual

were to do so, would this not foster a general sense of peace, within persons, and amongst community members? Indeed—it would in fact be a paradise. Without having experienced blooming gardens, nor the luxury of a land flowing with abundance, nor having known the Descent of God’s Presence on planet earth, humanity would achieve a veritable paradise on earth. Thus, Islam’s emphasis on social justice is implemented by believers’ behavior towards others and Islam imbues this behaviour within its followers in a pervasive manner beyond the sphere of any specific group, such as family or religion by demanding of Muslims the most noble of conduct towards one’s neighbor, with no reference to nor question of his belief, his status, his creed and according to Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad<sup>ra</sup>, not even in reference to his proximity to ourselves. How beautifully Islam teaches its followers, through its teachings of the rights of neighbors: Love for All, Hatred for None.

To understand the value and significance of a thing, sometimes it is important to understand what it is not. Or in the case of social theories, to understand the significance of a specific sociological phenomenon or condi-

tion, the consequences of its absence must be considered. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> sends a message of peace to his fellow people of India in his book, “A Message of Peace.” He highlights the importance of living peacefully with one another regardless of religious differences and in fact not only guides his followers to tolerate religious differences, but also stresses upholding them to the utmost<sup>5</sup>. Thus he argues, that by giving the recognition, respect and stature due to the beliefs of others, on the basis that all faiths emerge from the One True God, a society can flourish in peace and prosperity.<sup>6</sup> Now, consider the consequences of the absence of such respect and recognition. Pakistan is a glaring case in point.

For, is not Pakistan far from the paradise that our parents once remembered it to be, for its clergy espouses neither neighborly relations nor justice nor compassion, but instead espouses hatred and division between the masses on account of the very religion that first forbade them from creating disorder in the earth? Instead of encouraging neighbors to care for neighbors, they promote discord and ask citizens to harm their fellow citizens. While it began contained within the small

circle of a certain citizenry, this discord has come to encompass the whole nation in its grip. It is no small tragedy that Pakistanis have failed to abide by the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, but it is an even greater tragedy that while Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> and his disciple the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> both aspired towards an inter-religious community defined by a nature of most noble intent, the people of Pakistan use that very same religion to sow the seeds of destruction. Thus it is that when one fails to fulfil the commandment of Allah, particularly in terms of the rights of neighbors, does peace leave the land, and social cohesion becomes a thing of the past. And when this disease of the denial of the rights of neighbors becomes a nation-wide plague, do the people of an Eden fall from grace, as they have in Pakistan. ♦

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Armstrong, Karen. Islam: A Brief History. Modern Library: United States, 2002, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> The Holy Quran. Islam International Publications Limited. UK: 2002, chapter 4, verse 37.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., verse 36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 196

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam. A Message of Peace. UK: 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Hadith

## Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>

*Look at one who is below you  
and do not look at one who is  
above you. This would enable  
you to appreciate better  
the bounties that Allah has  
bestowed upon you.*

(Bukhari and Muslim)

# WATER FOR LIFE ►

*2.19 million villagers in 18 countries have access to safe drinking water through HF*



## Peace Through Serving Humanity

*Since 2005, Humanity First USA has installed dozens of wells in Asia and Africa, which provide potable drinking water for over 30,000 people. In May 2009 alone, Humanity First USA has restored 20 water wells in Ghana, West Africa. Humanity First teams are working on installing several more wells in Ghana, Liberia and Tanzania.*

**By Amtul M. Mansoor**

**As a Muslim,** one of the purposes of our creation is service to humanity. This entails half of our faith, while the other half is dedicated to the worship of God. In light of this, the Holy Qur'an says: "You are the best of the people by virtue of being of service to and raised for the benefit of mankind; you enjoin good, and forbid evil, and believe in Allah," (3: 111). As such, Muslims are responsible for the betterment of mankind. By serving humanity, not only do you please and serve God, but in the process, peace is also established within society and within ourselves.

In serving humanity, Muslims consider Prophet Muhammad's<sup>saw</sup> efforts as unsurpassed by none. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> has said that "people are the family of God Almighty, and God loves him the most who treats His family with love and compassion."<sup>1</sup> His entire life is dotted with examples of love and kindness for everyone, be they the children or the elderly, be they women or men, or be they Muslim or non-Muslim. One of the most well-known examples of his kindness is regarding his treatment of an old woman, who made a habit of throwing garbage on him when he would make his way to the mosque. When she would throw garbage on the Prophet<sup>saw</sup>, he would continue walking silently, bearing no sign of anger or disgust. If it was anybody else, he or she would have

been enraged and may have even treated her the same way. But not the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>. Instead, when one day, he noticed that she wasn't there when he was passing to go to the mosque, he inquired about her wellbeing. The neighbor informed the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> that she was sick. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> went to visit her and when he entered the house, the old woman thought that he had come for revenge, and he assured her that he had only come to look after her needs, as she was sick. His act of kindness moved her to the point that she accepted Islam.

Similarly, the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> has said, "I proclaim to all Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Aryas, that I have no enemy in the world. I love mankind with the love that a compassionate



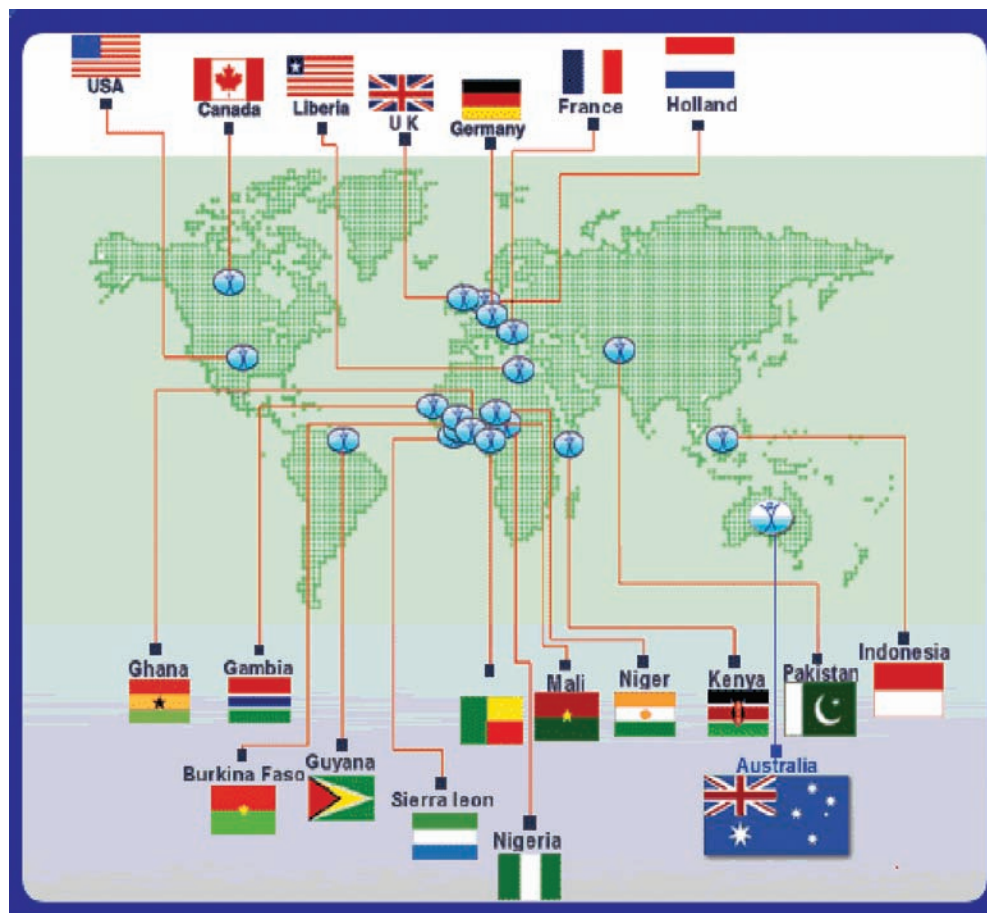
mother has for her children; even more so. I am only the enemy of the false doctrines which kill truth. Human sympathy is my duty. My principle is to discard falsehood. I reject paganism, wrongdoing, misconduct, injustice and immortality.”<sup>2</sup>

He further says: “As for me, if I am offering my prayers (*salat*) and I hear the voice of someone who is in pain; I like to stop praying and do whatever I can for that person and to show him sympathy as much as is in my power. It is not good morals that one should not help a brother who is in trouble. If there is nothing that you can do for him, you can at least pray for him.”<sup>3</sup>

Another aspect of serving humanity is charity, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. On this topic, the Holy Quran says: “Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, and those who suppress anger and pardon men; and Allah loves those who do good,” (3:135). Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> once said: “Every Muslim has to give charity.” The people then asked: “(But what) if someone has nothing to give, what should he do?” The Prophet<sup>saw</sup> replied: “He should work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns).” The people further asked: “If he cannot find even that?” He replied: “He should help the needy who appeal for help.” Then the people asked: “If he cannot (even) do that?” The Prophet<sup>saw</sup> said finally: “Then he should perform good deeds and keep away from evil deeds, and they will be regarded as charitable deeds.”<sup>4</sup> The simple act of smiling is also charity. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> has also said, “The best charity as part of a Muslim is to acquire knowledge and to impart it to others.”

God Almighty says in the Holy Quran: “And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbor that is a kinsman and the neighbor that is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hand possesses. Surely, Allah loves not the proud and the boastful” (4:37). Essentially, this verse teaches to serve your parents and family, to serve the orphans and the poor, and the neighbors and your friends, basically, to serve humanity. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V, Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>aba</sup> further elaborates that if believers firmly abide by these commandments, a peaceful society can surely be established.<sup>5</sup>

But when injustices are occurring in society, whether social, political, economical, or moral, the society is far from being a peaceful society. Instead, evil takes hold and there is



## Humanity First: Service to Humanity

*The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> has said that “people are the family of God Almighty, and God loves him the most who treats His family with love and compassion.”*

widespread destruction. Human rights are being violated, and this is the source of misery in the world. Peace will only come about with justice and benevolence. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran, “O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people’s enmity incite you to act otherwise that with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah, Surely Allah is aware of what you do”, (5:9).

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aba</sup> further expounds, “So, this is the way to establish peace. Do justice! And if you want to establish real peace, then not only do justice, but the strong should treat the weak with equity and treat them in the same manner as one treats one’s dear and beloved ones and ignores some of their defaults. Every problem cannot be solved with force, but good and just treatment fosters a feeling of bonding and trust. The urge for

real peace comes from the heart and the voice that comes from the heart is the only one that establishes real peace because it is based on love and warmth.”<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, we should excel in serving humanity to the best of our capabilities, from a simple act of smiling or sharing knowledge, to serving our parents, or feeding the hungry. This will not only foster inner peace, but also peace in our homes and society. At a time when the prospect of world peace seems impossible, we should try to make our world a better place and continue praying for world peace. ♦

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> “Service to Humanity-a Prerequisite for being the ‘Best People.’” <http://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Service-to-Humanity-Prerequisite-for-being-Best-People.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Arabeen, Pt. 1: Roohani Khazain, Vol. 17, p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> Malfoozat, Vol. 1, p. 442

<sup>4</sup> Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 2, Hadith 524

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/archives/2007/summary/FSS20070601-EN.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.alislam.org/khilafat/fifth/Islam\\_and\\_World\\_Peace-20080930MN.html](http://www.alislam.org/khilafat/fifth/Islam_and_World_Peace-20080930MN.html)

*The Holy Qur'an states, "And one of His signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them. And he has put love and tenderness between you" (30:22). In another place, the Quran says, "He it is Who has created you from a single soul, and made therefrom its mate that he may find comfort in her" (7:190)*



# Marital Harmony and Peace

*By Shahina Bashir*

## Quest for Peace

No one can deny this basic truth that the world is devoid of peace. Though we may not experience this absence of peace on a regular basis, it is unavoidable to encounter the many examples of disorder prevailing in our world today. We are living through an age of utmost turmoil and there seems to be no hope for peace. It is truly heartbreaking to watch the news about the constant violence in the Middle East and elsewhere. And we keep looking towards the heavens and pleading with God to bring about peace on earth. In the quest for peace, people are running hither and thither aimlessly. But instead of reaching this so-called mirage, they are in fact moving further away from it. How can we expect that the world will become a peaceful abode when we are failing to find peace in our homes? It is the establishment of peace at home which will usher an era of tranquility in the world.

## The Purpose of Marriage

The Holy Quran states, “And one of His signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them. And he has put love and tenderness between you” (30:22). In another place, the Quran says, “He it is Who has created you from a single soul, and made therefrom its mate that he may find comfort in her” (7:190).

It is clear from these Qur’anic verses that God Himself has established the institution of marriage so that a man and a woman can be joined together and become the foundation of a home filled with tranquility. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, who is the role model and the perfect exemplar for the Muslims, stressed the importance of getting married. He said, “There is no room for celibacy in Islam.”

If there is harmony and peace between the husband and wife then it will automatically influence the other relationships which surround them. Marriage is a way to attain piety and shield oneself from one’s natural desires. The Holy Quran aptly describes the relationship between a husband and wife as garments for each other. “They (women) are a garment for you and you are a garment for them” (2:188). Just as a garment protects us from the environment so do a husband and wife serve as protections for each other. Mar-

*“O ye people!  
Fear your Lord  
who created you  
from a single soul  
and of its kind  
created its mate,  
and from them  
twain spread many  
men and women;  
and fear Allah,  
in Whose name  
you appeal to one  
another, and fear  
Him particularly  
respecting ties of  
kinship. Verily  
Allah watches  
over you”  
(4:2)*

riage is also a means for procreation of the human race. Islam places utmost importance to chastity for both men and women and it is not acceptable for children to be born out of wedlock. Islam has laid out very clear guidelines regarding the roles and responsibilities of a husband and a wife.

## Living in harmony

The first and foremost ingredient for a happy and peaceful marital relationship is *taqwa* or the *fear of God* or *righteousness*. Friction and discord come about in a marriage when there is an absence of *taqwa*. God says in the Holy Quran,

“O ye people! Fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of kinship. Verily Allah watches over you” (4:2).

In this single verse the word *fear* is mentioned three times. Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> used to recite this verse at the time of performing the marriage ceremony. He particularly recited this verse to remind the two families about the importance of the ties of relationships. Many times disharmony in a marriage stems from misunderstandings amongst the families of the husband and wife. Marriage is not just between a man and a woman but it is a relationship between two families. Both the husband and wife have equal responsibilities to show due respect to each other’s near relatives.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Promised Messiah, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, was very clear about the proper relationship between a husband and wife. He said,

“The relationship between a husband and a wife should be as between two true and sincere friends. The primary witness of a person’s high moral qualities and of his relationship with God is his wife. If his relationship with his wife is not good, it is not possible that he should be at peace with God. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> has said, ‘The best of you are those who behave best towards their wives.’” (Malfoozat, Vol. V, pp. 417-418)

God has also given clear guidelines regarding the treatment of a wife by her husband. The Holy Quran says, “...and consort with them in kindness, and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing wherein God has placed much good” (4:20).



Both from the Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> as well as the saying of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, one cannot entertain any doubt that husband and wife must maintain a peaceful relationship with each other in order to earn the pleasure of God and a reward in the afterlife.

### Equal but separate

Verse 2 of Chapter 4 of the Holy Quran is also a reminder that human beings are equal as they have been created from a single soul. Neither the man nor the woman is superior to the other. However, they each have different roles to play. God has created both men and women with qualities that pertain to each of the genders. Therefore, keeping this difference in perspective Islam has laid out guidelines for the roles of a husband and a wife in a marital relationship. They both have to treat each other with mutual love and kindness. They each have rights and duties which are laid out very clearly by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>.

The primary role of a husband is that of a guardian and the head of the household. It is solely his responsibility to provide adequately for the family according to his means. The Holy Quran refers to the husband as *qawwam*, that is, the guardian. It is unfortunate that in many instances this important role of the man as a guardian and the head of the household is not fully understood. As a guardian the men have the responsibility of treating their wives with love and kindness. It is also the duty of the wife to understand that she needs to be obedient to her husband as this has been commanded by God Himself. Where disharmony prevails it can be seen that the root of discord lies in the fact that neither the husband nor the wife follows the commandment laid down by God.

In a peaceful household, the man is the bread winner and the wife maintains the home and the children. Although Islamic teaching does not prohibit a woman from working outside the home, she should be mindful about her role as the keeper of the house. It is also not the responsibility of the wife to use her

income for the upkeep of the home though there is no harm if she does so out of her own wish. It is seen here in the United States that both the husband and wife seek employment to maintain a higher standard of living. This is solely because of the materialism which has crept in today's society.

### Prayer for peace at home

Nothing is achievable without the mercy and help of God. It is for this reason that we have been taught various prayers for our daily needs. God has taught us how to pray in order to have a peaceful home. This prayer is, "Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous" (24:75). It is human frailty that we fall short of our obligations. But we cannot make our own weakness an excuse for our behaviors. When a person tries sincerely to tread on the path of righteousness and constantly seeks God's guidance, his life becomes a paradise on earth. Indeed, if the home becomes an abode of peace then peace will also reign in the world.



*"Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous" (24:75)*

**Islam makes clear that in order to achieve peace in the family, each member must do their part. Parents must lay the foundation for harmony and children must fulfill their duties to their siblings and parents.**

# Peace in the Family

*One of The Quran's beautiful blessings is a verse that asks of Allah, the Almighty, to exalt our families. The Quran states "Oh Lord, grant us of our spouses and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model of the righteous."*

By Azhar Ahmed Hussain

Among the many blessings of Islam exists a framework for Muslims to achieve a harmonious and sound family. Fathers, mothers, and children are all instructed of their responsibilities toward one another in order to create a balanced family. The example set by Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> further expands, clarifies, and affirms the splendor of the teachings in the Holy Quran that guide believers. The Promised Messiah Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> advanced the role that each member of a family must follow in order to achieve household peace. Islam promotes strong interpersonal relationships in a family as a pretext to harmony and believes that a functioning society requires harmonious family life.



## Peace in the Family Begins with the Parents

Islam has been established for the progress of mankind and began by abolishing barbaric customs, including those that were practiced by parents. Parents establish the foundation for peace within a family, but some widely accepted parenting methods proved extremely destructive.

Of the many archaic Arab practices was infanticide, or killing of one's own children.<sup>1</sup> Islam condemns the practice and forbids parents to consider the consequence of death as a punishment. In our modern society, the idea of death as a punishment seems so alien that we discount it completely. However, such

a practice still exists in some countries and those guilty of such despicable crimes are punished less severely than other murderers.<sup>2</sup> Fearing death from a parent is not only cruel, but breeds enmity within a family. Such dysfunction inhibits one's ability to confide in relatives for fear of one's own life. This inability to communicate destroys a family from within and ultimately harms society. Allah put an end to the destructive practice of infanticide in the Holy Quran when He declared, "... do not slay your children for fear of poverty, we provide for you and for them."<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the Quran commands, "Kill not your children for fear of poverty. It is We Who provide for them and you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin."<sup>4</sup>

Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> reinforced the teachings in the Quran against infanticide as evidenced in the *ah-hadith*. In Sahih Bukhari, Ibn ‘Umar states, “...Allah’s apostle (Prophet Muhammad) forbade the killing of women and children.”<sup>5</sup> In order to lay a basic foundation for a functional and peaceful family, Islam establishes that as a punishment infanticide must never be considered. Lastly, The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also instructed parents to “respect your children and cultivate in them good manners.”<sup>6</sup>

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> spoke of a parent’s obligations to their children in great detail and expanded their responsibilities. He instructed that beating one’s child is wrong and discouraged such actions. “Beating of children is an act which can be termed as a sort of *shirk*. It actually means that the ill tempered person makes himself a partner of God in giving guidance and sustaining the creatures.”<sup>7</sup> Instead of resorting to violence, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> stated, “I wish that, instead of punishing children, parents would resort to prayer, and would make it a habit to supplicate earnestly for their children as the supplications of the parents for their children are particularly accepted by God.”<sup>8</sup>

The Promised Messiah’s instructions on parenting were ahead of their time as only now in our current era is research beginning to show the negative effects of corporal punishment on children. One study suggests that using physical violence to modify behavior actually increases the likelihood of future deviant behavior and violence.<sup>9</sup> Many countries across the globe have even banned corporal punishment against children deemed that the practice violates the basic human rights of children.<sup>10</sup>

One of the Quran’s beautiful blessings is a verse that asks of Allah, the Almighty, to exalt our families. The Quran states “Oh Lord, grant us of our spouses and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model of the righteous.”<sup>11</sup> The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> frequently emphasized prayer as a vital resource for the benefit of mankind. Likewise, a parent’s greatest resource to ensure the wellbeing of their children is a frequent and genuine prayer to Allah.

### The Responsibilities of Children

Achieving a peaceful and harmonious family life requires active participation and effort from every member of the family. Imposed upon children are a set of duties they owe to both, their siblings and parents.

# family values

**Laugh Out Loud**  
**Love One Another**  
**KEEP YOUR PROMISES**  
**help others**  
**SAY PLEASE and THANK YOU**  
**Don't Whine**  
**Work Hard**  
**SAY I LOVE YOU**  
**Be GRATEFUL**  
**use kind words**  
**always tell the TRUTH**  
**Do Your Best**

Common in families is sibling jealousy; one sibling may develop ill thoughts toward the way their brothers or sisters are treated. This type of angst breeds discord and creates long-term hostility, which often leads to further problems.

The Holy Quran requires Muslims to abstain from jealousy completely; this does not exclude siblings who must refrain from engag-

ing in such behavior. The Quran states, “And covet not that whereby Allah has made some of you excel others. Men shall have a share of that which they have earned, and women a share of that which they have earned. And Ask Allah His bounty.”<sup>12</sup> Of the many blessings of the Quran, it recognizes that enmity and jealousy in society is a poison that undermines peace and stability. This threat extends



to families and a peaceful and stable family depends on siblings avoiding petty jealousy.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> emphasized the danger that jealousy poses to Muslims. As recorded in the *hadith*, “The person may forget all of Allah’s mercy and blessings bestowed upon him. The Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup> said: They are enemies of Allah’s bounties. When asked, Who are they? He replied: Those who envy people for what Allah has given them of bounty.”<sup>13</sup> Recognizing the inherent and often silent threat that holding jealousy toward one another poses, Islam prohibits such insidious thoughts. This lesson is most important to remember in the family setting where members interact frequently and such perverse thoughts can wreak havoc on the unity of a family.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also recognized the wider societal impact that hosting jealousy holds and issued a stern warning to all Muslims that jealousy must be eradicated. Specifically, Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was recorded as stating, “There has come to you the disease of the nations before you, jealousy and hatred. This is the ‘shaver’ (destroyer); I do not say that it shaves hair, it shaves (destroys) faith.”<sup>14</sup> In a home where jealousy is fostered among siblings and not corrected, this habit will be carried into adulthood and will be reflected among the wider society if allowed. It is incumbent for the success of a family and a society that siblings not engage in jealousy but rather celebrate each other’s successes and encourage one another in all aspects in life.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> advised at length what a lamentable and egregious act thinking ill of others is. He describes it as an act that consumes one’s faith and makes such a person the enemy of God.<sup>15</sup> The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> stated, “I tell you truly that the habit of thinking ill of others is a great affliction which destroys a person’s faith, flings him far away from truth and converts his friends into enemies... This habit should not be underrated. It is a dangerous disease which destroys a person very quickly. In short, thinking ill of another ruins a person.”<sup>16</sup> The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> held such attitudes as a barrier to faith and noted their potential for widespread discord.

A family in which siblings avoid negative, jealous attitudes is one that invites peace and harmony. Rather than harboring jealousy toward a sibling’s successes, encouragement and praise must be offered which in turn must be equally given toward all siblings and children. A harmonious family heartens one

**The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, who was orphaned at a young age, never made any question as to the importance of cherishing one’s parents and the necessary role it plays in fostering peace and harmony.**

another with praise in an attempt to better one another.

A child’s most important responsibility in a family, however, are the duties they owe their parents. Islam teaches children to love, respect, and care for their parents as a necessary aspect of faith.

The Quran commands children to be good to their parents in several blessed verses. In one such verse, Muslims are instructed of how to treat elderly parents. Specifically, the Quran states, “...And that ye show kindness to parents. If one or both of them attain old age with thee, never say to them as much as *ugh*. Nor reproach them, but always address them with kindly speech. And lower to them the wing of humility out of tenderness.”<sup>17</sup> Following the teachings of the Holy Quran is no doubt the path to righteousness and peace. For a family to function, children must obey and respect their parents. Often, children are inclined toward youthful rebellion; however, such actions are not only unwise, but also go against the teachings of the Holy Quran. Disobedience to the wishes of parents fosters distrust and hostility in a family. To establish

peace in a family, children must follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and fulfill their obligations to their parents.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> spoke at length regarding a child’s duties toward their parents. As recorded in Bukhari, “Allah’s Apostle said, ‘It is one of the greatest sins that a man should curse his parents.’”<sup>18</sup> The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is also recorded as saying as to which are the greatest sins, “To join partners in worship to Allah: to be undutiful to one’s parents.”<sup>19</sup> The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, who was orphaned at a young age, never made any question as to the importance of cherishing one’s parents and the necessary role it plays in fostering peace and harmony.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> spoke to the treatment a child owes to his parents as well when he stated, “But of course it is for you to try all you can to be good to them (parents) and to look after them as best lies in your power; you should not lose any opportunity to serve them.”<sup>20</sup> It is incumbent for children to treat their parents well to function as a peaceful family.

Islam makes clear that in order to achieve peace in the family, each member must do their part. Parents must lay the foundation for harmony and children must fulfill their duties to their siblings and parents. Parents must foster positive growth of their children and children must respect their parents and avoid jealousy and ill thoughts toward their siblings. Islam provides a blessed path for peace in the family, and it is the responsibility of each family member to follow that path. ♦

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Fadia Faquir “Intrafamily Femicide in Defence of Honour: The Case of Jordan,” in *Women and Islam: Social Conditions, Obstacles and Prospects*, 2005, Haideh Moghissi (Taylor & Francis), 115.

<sup>2</sup> Yotam Feldner, “‘Honor’ Murders- Why the Perps get off Easy,” *Middle East Quarterly* (Vol. 3 No. 4), 41.

<sup>3</sup> Holy Qur’an, Surah Al-Anaam: Verse 151.

<sup>4</sup> Holy Qur’an, Bani Israel: Verse 31

<sup>5</sup> Sahih Bukhari 4:52, 258

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Majah

<sup>7</sup> Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Malfoozat Vol 2. P. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Id., 4

<sup>9</sup> Mary A. Strauss, “Discipline and Deviance: Physical Punishment of Children and Violence and Other Crimes in Adulthood,” *Social Problems* Vol. 38 No. 2 (May, 1991) 133.

<sup>10</sup> Anne Houston, “There’s no Justification for Hitting our Children,” *Scotland on Sunday*, July 22, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Holy Qur’an, Surah Al-Furqan: Verse 75.

<sup>12</sup> Holy Qur’an, Surah AL Nisa: Verse 33

<sup>13</sup> At-Tabarani

<sup>14</sup> Al Tirmidhi No. 3424

<sup>15</sup> Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Al Wasiyyat* P. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Malfoozat* Vol 1 P.356.

<sup>17</sup> Holy Qur’an, Bani Israel: Verse 24-25.<sup>18</sup> Sahih Bukhari, Book 73.

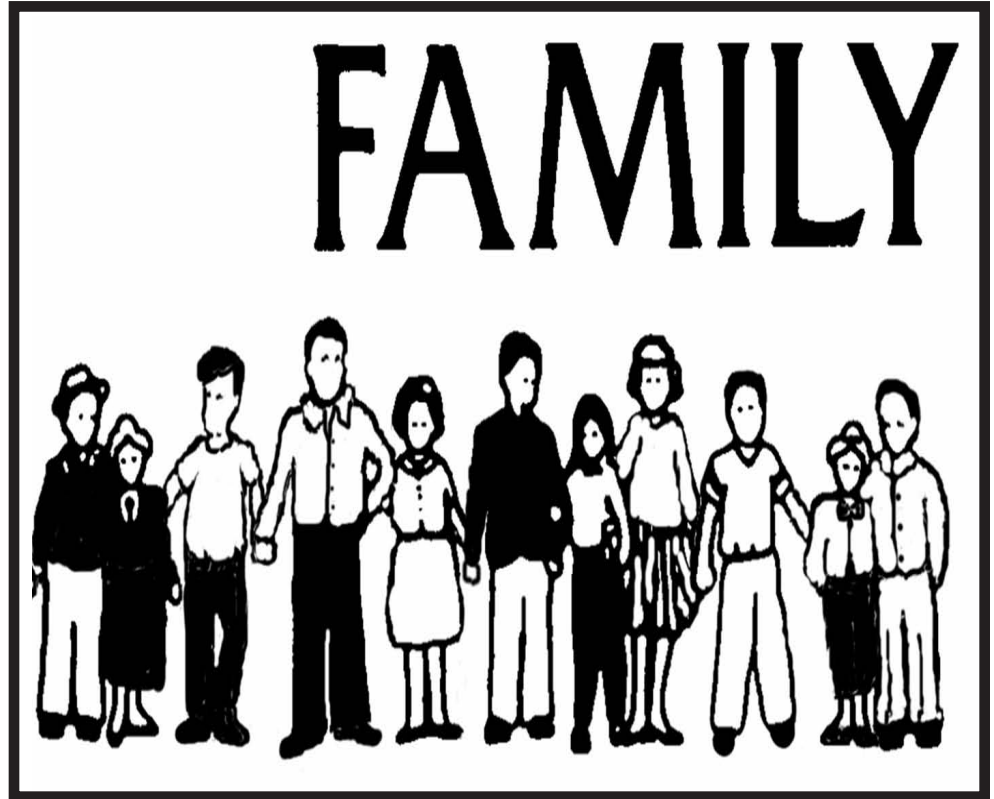
<sup>19</sup> Id.

<sup>20</sup> Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Malfoozat* Vol 10, p 131.

# Justice & Love: Principles of Peace With In-Laws

By Atif Munawar Mir

**L**ove is the primary emotion that dominates human relations. Ironically, while this emotion is often a source of joy, at times it mutates into jealousy and envy and causes much pain and anguish to loved ones. This powerful emotion is always at odds with justice, the primary quality that should guide all human interactions. Nowhere does this tension between love and justice become more visible than in the case of relations between in-laws. Sometimes parents out of love or jealousy find faults in the spouse or in-laws of their child, unable or unwilling to acknowledge the reality that their perception and ensuing decisions, made as they are out of love, are sometimes irrational and rarely just. Love and affection between children and their parents enables an enriching relationship between the two. However, such unconditional affections sometimes trample the rights of others, such as the rights of in-laws. Therefore, one must adjudge the value and true meaning of love, in order to ensure love tempered by justice, honesty, and integrity. The first step towards this goal is to clear your heart from all false suspicions and doubts.



The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says:

*The mischief starts when a person indulges in false suspicions and doubts. If a person thinks well in every situation, he is bestowed with the capacity to achieve good. A mistake at the very start makes it difficult to reach the goal. Thinking ill of another is a great vice which deprives person of many opportunities of doing good and which goes on mounting till a person begins to think ill of God Almighty.*<sup>1</sup>

With this attitude, everyone must evaluate their love for their parents and children and their responsibility for all other relations, including their in-laws.

Love Must not Mutate  
into Jealousy and Envy

There is often a tendency on the part of parents to misinterpret the true meaning of

love. Out of jealousy, parents sometimes do not want to share the love of their children and feel uncomfortable when a child gives his/her affections to a spouse or in-laws. The perfect example of a character with such a shortcoming is *King Lear*, who asks his three daughters to declare their love for him in order to win his inheritance. He puts his daughters in a situation where they need to compete for his inheritance by competing for his love. His daughter Goneril tries to win over his inheritance by saying words that are more powerful than her love for her father. She says:

*"I love you more than words can say. I love you more than eyesight, space, and freedom, beyond wealth or anything of value. I love you as much as life itself, and as much as status, health, beauty, or honor. I love you as much as any child has ever loved her father, with a love too deep to be spoken of".*<sup>2</sup>

On the contrary, Cordellia, the youngest, honest and wisest daughter of *King Lear* tries

to express her love for her father with honesty. She says:

“My Lord, you brought me up and loved me, and I’m giving back just as I should: I obey you, love you, and honor you. How can my sisters speak the truth when they say they love only you? Don’t they love their husbands too? Hopefully when I get married, I’ll give my husband half my love and half my sense of duty.”<sup>3</sup>

Cordellia’s honest and wise response angers King Lear and he banishes her. Instead of looking out for Cordellia’s happiness, he acts on the misguided belief that he exclusively deserves the love of his daughters. It seems that the grip of jealousy and envy prevents him from celebrating in the joys of his daughters. Jealousy and envy plays trick on our minds and sometimes hamper our ability to see clear truths. Love should not be selfish but generous. It is the responsibility of sons and daughters to respect their in-laws and in turn in-laws must love their children by working to strengthen the bond of love between their children and their spouses.

### Love Must not Become Blind

Sometimes love is blind. Parents and children find the faults of all relational problems with in-laws. This attitude erodes trust between parties and sometimes costs a certain party their integrity of character as he/she begins to think of himself/herself as the victim and feels justified in crossing the line to protect his/her perceived interests.

God has blessed us with families that sustain us, support us, guide us and enrich our lives but at the same time God says:

“Verily, your wealth and your children are a trial; but with Allah is an immense reward.” (64:16)

God did not grant us children so that we can love them blindly. One must love them wisely. Children are the blessings of God. They must be loved and nurtured so as express gratitude for God’s blessing, but never to the extent that love for them violates the cause of justice. For one’s children should not be raised so as to become a source of hardship for others including their in-laws. By failing this trial, the love of a child becomes the source of sorrow instead of joy for both the child and the parent—in this life and in the hereafter. Wise love is the source of peace and happiness and lays the foundations for a healthy and balanced life for the next generation.

***Fostering joy in one’s home is the responsibility of a husband and wife. This responsibility however becomes significantly easier and proves more successful an effort when both sets of in-laws love their children wisely and try to be just.***

### Resolution of Conflicts through Justice

However, even if parents temper their love of their children with utmost justice and teach them to honestly fulfill the rights of all relations, including those of in-laws, conflicts do still occur. However, most of the time conflicts can be resolved. In this regard, the Holy Quran offers some generic guidance:

“And if two parties of believers fight each other, make peace between them; then if after that one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the Just”. (49:10)

In other words, quarrels do occur. It is the responsibility of third parties to bring about reconciliation. But if conflict resurfaces, it is time for justice not reconciliation. If justice is established, the likelihood of the recurrence of conflict will decrease significantly. But sometimes egoistic tendencies and jealousies between parties block the dispensation of justice and turn minor problems into major conflicts.

The Holy Quran wants us to be kind to parents but this kindness must not become a

source of pain to in-laws. Justice must always be upheld.

### The Holy Quran says again:

“O ye who believe! be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do”. (4:136)

Loving and showing utmost kindness to our parents is their inviolable right, but we must never forget that our obedience belongs to God alone and this obedience demands that we demonstrate respect, fairness and justice towards all our relations, as is their due, including the relation of in-laws.

### Conclusion

Fostering joy in one’s home is the responsibility of a husband and wife. This responsibility however becomes significantly easier and proves more successful an effort when both sets of in-laws love their children wisely and try to be just. Such an attitude will bring about peace and joy to all concerned parties as well as to the next generation. The significance of this is perfectly articulated in the Friday Sermon of Khalifa tul Masih V<sup>aba</sup>. He advises:

The advent of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> took place to remove all animosities and to replace them with love and to attract those who were ‘lost’ towards God with gentleness and forbearance. This is a great objective for each Ahmadi and none can fulfil it until they rid themselves of their egocentric tendencies. If we do not have gentleness and courtesy in our homes how could we show the way to others for we would be lost ourselves! Each Ahmadi should reflect over themselves and their homes and contemplate if they have unconsciously drifted away from the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. ♦

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam, “Thinking Ill of Others” in The Essence of Islam, Vol. II, Islam International Publications, 2nd Edition, 2004, p. 363

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, King Lear, Spark Publishing, 2003, p. 7 (To present the quotation in contemporary English, the author has relied on No Fear Shakespeare by Spark Publishing which puts Shakespeare English side by side with Plain English)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 11

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/archives/2006/summary/FSS20061110-EN.html>



# Inter-religious Peace

By Dr. Zia Shah

Most of us stay in the religion of our birth and we inherit the prejudices of our religious groups. We seldom grow beyond them. As a result we see the world through the lens of bias. If our lenses do not change, neither do our views. To the Christians most Muslims appear militant, and Islam a religion that spread through the sword. To atheists, all religious people seem to be indulging in inherited superstitions. To Sunni Muslims, the Ahmadi Muslims appear as heretics, who should be persecuted out of public existence. As beauty lies in the eye of the observer and eyes do not see what the mind does not know, we seldom open ourselves to new ideas, new realities or new horizons as far as religion is concerned.



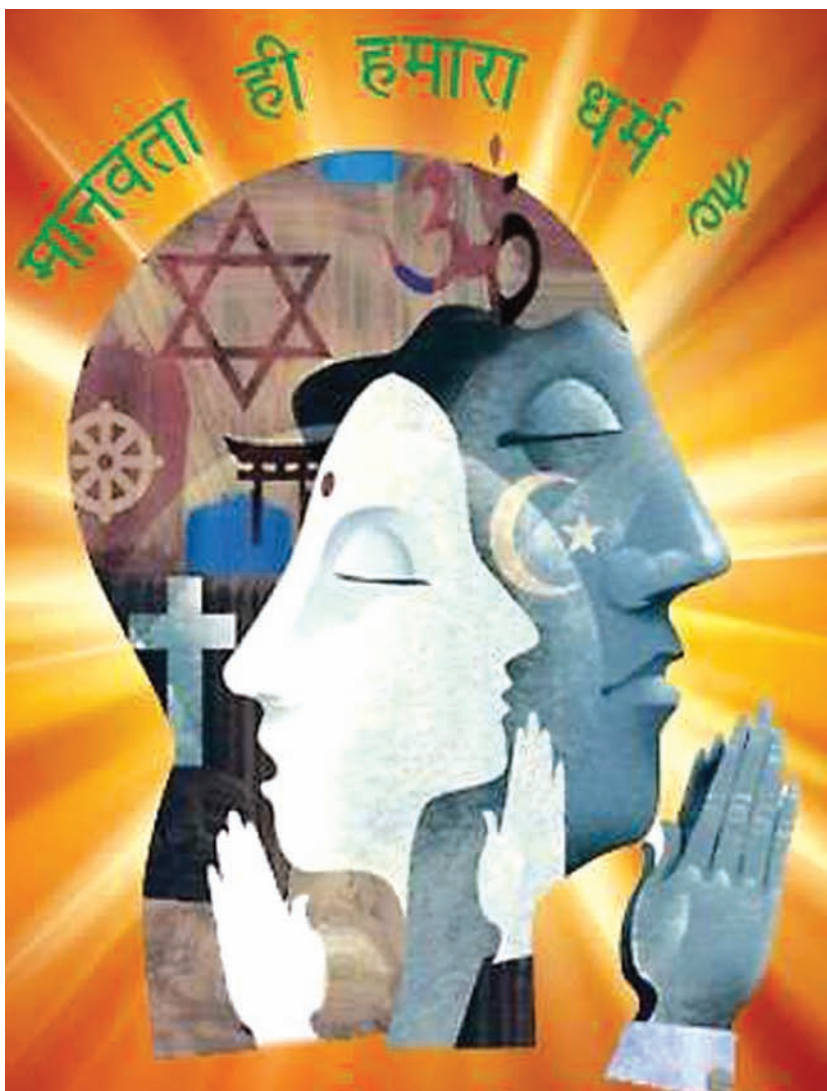
propose that sometimes we should pretend to be the other. We should pretend to be a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim, a humanist, an agnostic, an atheist, a Hindu or a Buddhist. This pretension may open up our minds out of the fixed ideas created by our childhood indoctrination. Such an exercise will open up new realities for each one of us. I challenge every reader to putting oneself in different shoes.

**The *Globe and Mail* reported that Canada's largest Protestant church voted on Friday 17th August, 2012, to approve a boycott of products made in Israeli settlements. United Church of Canada took this bold step after** more than seven hours of lively debate, The resolutions by the Church also singled out Israeli settlements as a principal obstacle to peace in the region, called on Israel to suspend settlement expansion, and expressed regret for previously asking Palestinians to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish state.<sup>1</sup> It is no secret that that Israel-Palestine conflict is largely defined across religious lines; most Israelis being Jewish and most Palestinians, Muslims and Christians. Former American President Jimmy Carter has invested much of his life to resolve these tensions, and for those efforts he received Nobel Peace Prize. He has nicely summed up his evaluation in an excellent book, *"Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid."*

From the Middle East let us go to South East Asia. Zohara Khatun is still reeling from the trauma of seeing her father killed in western Burma in June of this year. "My father was shot dead by the Burmese military in front me. Our entire village was destroyed. We ran for our lives. I still don't know what happened to my mother," she said, sitting in a thatched hut in a fishing village near the town of Teknaf in south-eastern Bangladesh.

Ms. Khatun is one of the Rohingya Muslims who have managed to cross into Bangladesh following the communal unrest in western Burma's Rakhine province. The 30-year old broke down repeatedly as she tried to explain what happened over the border. She says their village came under attack during clashes between majority Buddhists and local Muslims, mostly from the Rohingya minority. Nearly 80 people were killed in the fighting and thousands were displaced. Human rights groups allege that Burmese security forces

continue to carry out mass arrests, forcing many Rohingya Muslims to flee. A state of emergency declared last month is still in force in many places of the province. I am quoting what BBC reported in July of this year.<sup>2</sup> The international media scantily covered these atrocities and has not hastened to call it Buddhism's terrorism, as they would have if the Muslims were the perpetrators.



Next we fly across the Atlantic or Pacific to come to the USA. The FBI will investigate a recent rampage at a Sikh temple by a Christian belonging to a hate group, Wade Page, in a Milwaukee suburb as a "domestic terrorist-type incident" that left at least six people and the gunman dead, the town's police chief said. Another three people were wounded, including the first officer to respond to the scene. All three of the wounded were in critical condition at Milwaukee's Froedtert Hospital, spokeswoman Carolyn Bellin told CNN.

The congregation's president was among the wounded, his nephew said.<sup>3</sup> It is reassuring that the incident has been properly identified as terrorism, but why hasn't anyone brought up Christian terrorism, as the religion of the approximately 1,000 hate groups operational right now in USA? If the perpetrator had been a Muslim the media would have jumped to immediate conclusions and certainly put Islam on trial.

The tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, USA on July 20, 2012, a mass shooting of innocent people, at a Century movie theater, during a midnight screening of the film, *The Dark Knight Rises*, did not enjoy appropriate characterization as domestic or Christian terrorism. Nevertheless, it was tragic enough that it has merited a *Wikipedia* page for itself, which states:

"A gunman, dressed in tactical clothing, set off tear gas grenades and shot into the audience with multiple firearms, killing 12 people and injuring 58 others. The sole suspect is James Eagan Holmes, who was arrested outside the cinema minutes later. The shooting is one of the worst in contemporary United States history in terms of the number of people injured."<sup>4</sup>

The national media coverage of this heinous tragedy would have taken religion out of the picture. But, an evangelical spokesperson for a religious group known as *Truth in Action* claimed

that the tragedy in Colorado happened because America has lost its fear of hell. In an article published on *OneNewsNow*, evangelical Jerry Newcombe wrote:

"I can't help but feel that to some extent, we're reaping what we've been sowing as a society. We said to God, 'Get out of the public arena.' Lawsuit after lawsuit, often by misguided 'civil libertarians,' have chased away any fear of God in the land — at least in the hearts of millions."

Newcombe is not alone in reacting this



way to the shooting in Aurora. On the day of the shooting Rep. Gohmert of Texas also insisted that the shootings are the result of “ongoing attacks on Judeo-Christian Beliefs,” with exclusion of other belief systems or lack thereof. Regardless of the characterization of some clergy, the national media hastened to examine the mental state of Holmes, rather than his religion, which they would have done if Holmes had any Islam in his background. In short, a lot of world politics and struggles are divided across the religious lines, knowingly or unknowingly.

We have not travelled to Europe yet. Let us go there and talk about the struggle between Christianity and atheism. Agnosticism and atheism are gaining momentum in Europe, more than in Canada and the USA. Battle lines are being drawn. No wonder, Pope Benedict XVI has taken a German satirical magazine to court over a front cover that pictured the pontiff with a yellow stain down the front of his hassock. The Pope has asked a law firm to take action against *Titanic* magazine, which used the cover to introduce a story on the “Vatileaks” scandal. The cover picture features the Pope with a crotch-height yellow stain, accompanied by the headline *Hallelujah in the Vatican: the leak has been found*. The back of the magazine features a picture of the Pope taken from the rear with a brown stain along with a headline *Another Leak Found*. Matthias Kopp, spokesman for the German Bishop’s Conference, told the magazine *Spiegel* that the Vatican had hired a Bonn law firm to take action in the name of the Pope, adding that the *Titanic* cover “oversteps every level of decency.”<sup>5</sup> But, the question remains if some Christian newspaper publishes cartoons of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, would the Pope and his Archbishops consider it *below the belt*?

The inter-sectarian scene is not any less intense, at least among the Muslims. In the third largest city in Punjab, Pakistan, namely Faisalabad, a heavy police contingent during the Holy month of Ramadan, on the demand of a banned organization, removed Quranic verses and religious texts written on tombstones of Ahmadi Muslim graves to save the area from clashes on religious grounds. An application was moved to the area police of Uncha Mangat claiming Kassoki villagers’ demands of the removal of Quranic verses and religious text from Ahmadi graves in the graveyard on Hafizabad-Sheikhupura Road. The applicants threatened religious clashes and bloodshed if this was not done and the

police obliged the belligerent, in the disguise of law and order.<sup>6</sup>

A recent Pew Forum poll points out that many Sunni Muslims consider Shia Muslims as non-Muslims. These Sunni Muslims have continued to harbor prejudices from medieval times, against Shia Muslims that are completely counterproductive in this day and age of our Global village. In this Poll, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life has defined, what joins and separates the Muslims. There is a 164 page report of the poll that took 38,000 face to face interviews.<sup>7</sup> Azerbaijan came out to be most rational in this regards, where 90% consider Shia to be Muslims. Kosovo and Indonesia were the worst in this regard. However, one of the biggest ironies was that Pakistan, a nation once founded to be the homeland of Muslims, is now bickering over who gets to be called a Muslim. Pew Research Center has exposed the depth of sectarian fault lines in Pakistan, where only one in every two Sunni Muslims accepts Shias as Muslims. While many believed that such extreme sectarian views were held only by the fanatics lying at the margin, the Pew Center’s findings reveal that such intolerant and extremist views are in fact mainstream in Pakistan. Even Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a Shia Muslim and the founder of Pakistan, today would have been considered a non-Muslim, strictly speaking, by the blind followers of narrow minded Sunni scholars, comprising almost half of the Pakistani population.<sup>8</sup>

The title of my article is inter-religious peace, but, so far I have talked about the exact opposite and shown only inter-religious chaos, to highlight how badly we need mutual understanding. In the last section I am going to share some pointers and some reading materials to do justice to my title. In the twenty-first century, our world has been reduced to a global village with our nano-technology and modes of communication and transport. We have demystified the mysteries of the quantum world, man has landed on the moon and recently NASA’s Curiosity robot landed successfully on Mars. We can do better than what has been described above in the religious and political arena.

The Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> Qadiani came in India 120 years ago to unite all religions and mankind by emphasizing religious freedom for everyone and the fact that the founders of all religions, Confucius, Buddha, Tao, Krishna, Ram, Moses and Jesus were prophets of God. He initiated the renaiss-

sance of Islam in keeping with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. His fourth successor, Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>th</sup> wrote in his ground breaking book, “*Islam’s Response to Contemporary Issues*”:

“First of all, it should be kept in mind that no religion other than Islam recognises the universality of prophethood. When the Jews claim, if they do, that Moses was the greatest Prophet, they are not comparing Moses with Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, or Muhammad, because they deny the claims of all other great Founders of the religions mentioned above to be genuine and worthy of acceptance. So, in the Jewish list of Prophets, no Prophets are included other than those specifically mentioned in the Old Testament; even the possibility of there being Prophets elsewhere is ruled out. In the light of this attitude, their claim regarding the supremacy of any Judaic Prophet does not belong to the same category as that of Islam, as according to Judaism, Prophets outside the Holy Bible simply do not exist. Exactly the same is the nature of similar claims of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, etc.”

The first chapter of this book deals with inter-religious peace, in a comprehensive manner, and can be read online in the Library section of Alislam.org.<sup>9</sup>

As we study the strengths and vulnerabilities of different religions, we should not forget that religion is almost always married to politics as we saw in the conversion of Emperor Constantine in the Roman Empire during the fourth century. It is still all too apparent not only in the politics of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Israel but in the leading country of the world, the only super-power of the world, the USA, where the right wing Christian agenda is married to the politics of the Republican Party. Therefore, to ensure the separation of Church and State, let me suggest an article: Solomonic wisdom needed to establish Separation of Mosque-Church-Synagogue and State. ♦

## (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/united-church-of-canada-approves-israeli-settlement-boycott/article4487724/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/united-church-of-canada-approves-israeli-settlement-boycott/article4487724/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18933908>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.themuslimtimes.org/2012/08/americas/gunman-killed-six-at-wisconsin-sikh-temple#ixzz23zDwBGNE>

<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012\\_Aurora\\_shooting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Aurora_shooting)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/the-pope/9392600/Pope-sues-German-magazine-over-Vatileaks-cover.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://tribune.com.pk/story/423802/police-remove-quranic-verses-from-ahmadi-graves-to-avert-clashes/>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious\\_Affiliation/Muslim/the-worlds-muslims-full-report.pdf](http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Muslim/the-worlds-muslims-full-report.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.themuslimtimes.org/2012/08/asia/a-mystery-of-21st-century-who-is-a-muslim>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/IslamsResponseToContemporaryIssues.pdf>

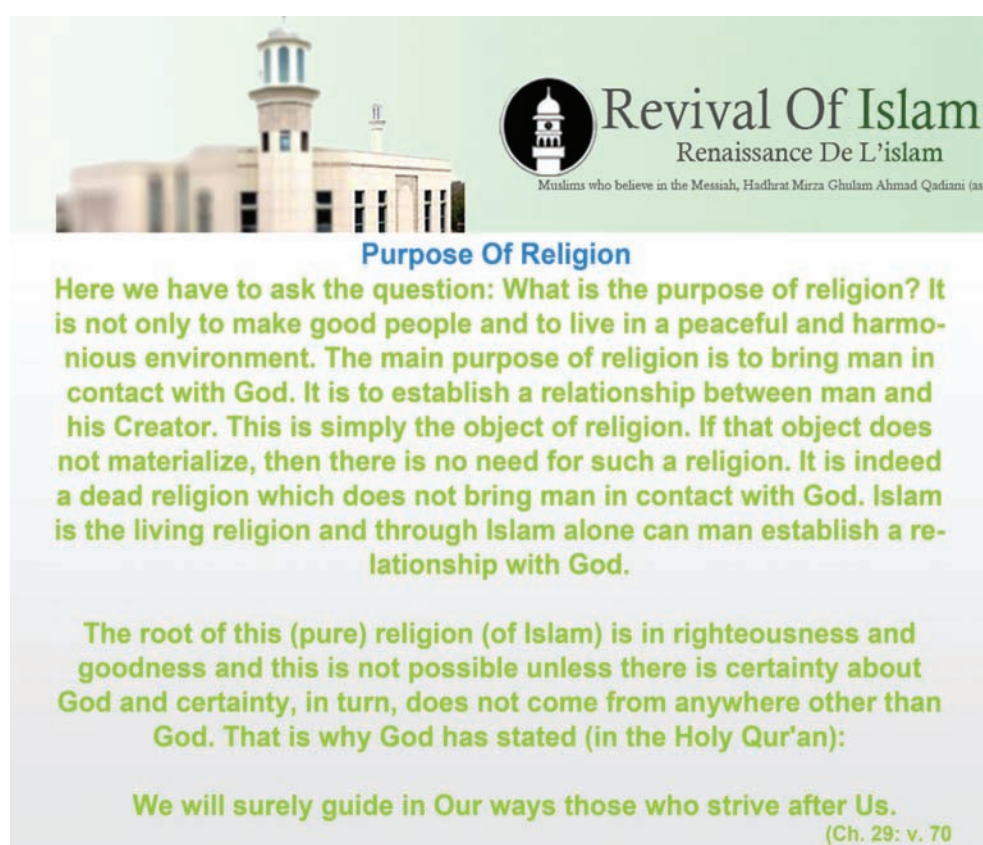


# A Message of Peace

*A review of the farewell work of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian*  
By Lubna R. Malik

**C**ompleted on May 25, 1908, the day before his demise, *A Message of Peace*, the final writing by the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, discusses the core principles of peace, sympathy, universal compassion and tolerance that apply to all people and all faiths.<sup>1</sup> The Promised Messiah invites his readers to come to a truce and strive towards reconciliation amongst themselves “before such evil days confront you”.<sup>2</sup> The Promised Messiah’s message of peace lays out the path towards such reconciliation through the faith that literally means “peace” – Islam.

The Promised Messiah begins by discussing a basic understanding of God. In the Holy Quran it says, “All perfect and holy attributes belong exclusively to God, who is Lord of all the worlds.”<sup>3</sup> The world for “worlds” is ‘*alam*, which comprises all different peoples, ages and countries. Thus, unlike some faiths that teach that God came to save a specific people or for a certain time, Islam teaches that God is Lord of *all* people *everywhere* since the beginning of time. This is furthered by



the Islamic belief that all people were blessed with prophets for guidance and reformation. The Promised Messiah notes that all religious scripture in its original form taught these same principles of a universal and loving God.<sup>4</sup>

With this basic understanding of the universality of God and His magnanimity, the Promised Messiah writes that all people believe in One God and, through this belief, a Muslim is like a neighbor to a Hindu and to a Christian and to a Jew, and to any other believer. This God that everyone believes in has never discriminated between any people, and humans should strive to imitate God by similarly treating all as equals. The Promised Messiah writes, “Anyone who contemplates the annihilation of the other is like one who

saws off the branch on which he is sitting.”<sup>5</sup> Why would anyone wish to harm themselves? The answer is to not hold grudges and hate in one’s heart, but instead to promote mutual love.

The Promised Messiah clearly states that politics is not the main reason for discord among people. The primary underlying factor for the vile behavior that people of one faith have against another is seeded in the erroneous view that God picked one people to protect or to guide, and failure to correct this view will allow the malice in the world to continue to grow. As stated, God does not discriminate and has sent prophets to all people. Thus, the Promised Messiah writes, “to insult and abuse the Prophets and Mes-

sengers of different countries and peoples is such a deadly poison which not only destroys the body but also kills the soul.”<sup>6</sup>

After making this generalized appeal to all people, the Promised Messiah moves on to address the Muslims and how Muslims, as those who retain an uncorrupted scripture from God Almighty, need to step forward and practice true Islamic teachings. One such teaching is for Muslims to acknowledge and declare the truth of all prophets according to the Holy Quran, which states, “We [Muslims] make no distinction between any of them [the prophets], and to Him we [Muslims] submit.”<sup>7</sup> Showing this level of respect to the prophets of other people is even more valuable in the path to peace than showing respect to another’s parents.

The Promised Messiah expands the duty of Muslims to even non-believers. In the Holy Quran it says, “Do not even abuse the idols of the non-believers, lest they abuse your God out of ignorance.”<sup>8</sup> The golden principle of treating others the way you would like to be treated is truly universal – Muslims must even respect those who do not believe in God and must respect the idols of such people so

that those same people respect the One God. Thus, there is never an excuse to disrespect another.

The Promised Messiah further reaches out to Muslims by relating the example of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace and blessings of God upon him). At the time God blessed the earth with his presence, evil practices contaminated the entire earth, and Mecca was no exception. Mecca was known for theft and robbery, pointless murder, the usurpation of the rights of relatives and strangers, rampant fornication and drinking, torture and dishonesty. It is in this society that the unlettered orphan Muhammad was raised tending goats with no wealth to his name. At the age of twenty-five, God revealed to him that he had been chosen to guide mankind. The Holy Prophet faced all types of aggression and resistance, but never did he engage in any disrespect of any kind towards anyone. He was surrounded in his own home by enemies that wanted to murder him and that tracked him en route to Medina during his migration, but still he never disrespected them. Muslims must recognize the true mercy God bestowed on the Holy Prophet

that, when he was migrating and took shelter in the cave of Hira with the Meccans on his trail, God sent a spider to spin a web and a pigeon to build its nest and lay eggs at the entrance of the cave to deter the Meccan enemies from taking one step into the cave and finding the Holy Prophet. The religion of Islam that was established by God Almighty through this messenger of His seeks to establish the Unity and Majesty of God on earth and to gather all people into one unit.

If Muslims do not recognize the purpose and teachings of Islam and how much God has blessed the world with Islam by showing respect to their own Holy Prophet by following his example, why would anyone else show Islam or its Prophet this regard? Muslims must lead the way by following Islam, the religion of peace, and the Holy Prophet and then the world will embrace the same spirit of universal peace, respect and love. ♦

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, A Message of Peace (trans.), Islam International Publications Ltd.: London, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad, 12.<sup>3</sup> Holy Qur’an, 1:2 (Al-Fatiha).

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad, 11.<sup>6</sup> Ahmad, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Qur’an, 3:85 (Al-e-Imrân)

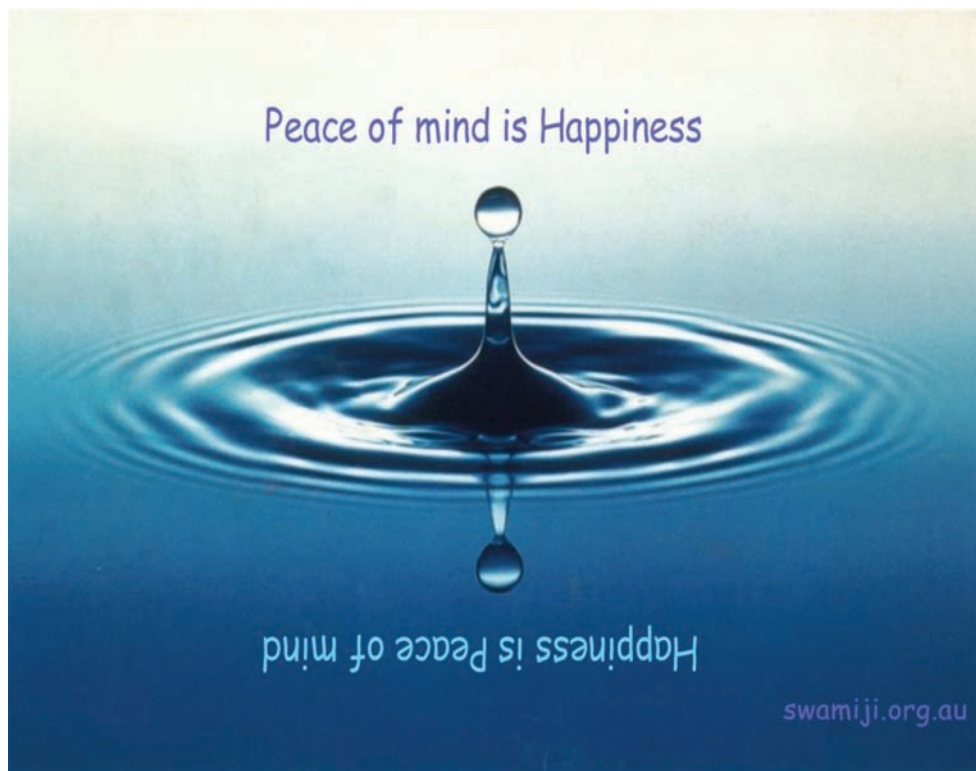
<sup>8</sup> Qur’an, 6:109 (Al-An’âm)

## Hadith

Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>

**Do not desire the world, and Allah will love you; and do not desire that which people have and they will love you.**

**(Ibn-i-Maja)**



# Peace of Mind

By Shanaz Butt

**W**e live in a society that endorses superficiality, super competitiveness and supersizing; whether it is the size of our homes or TV screens; number of cars or electronic gadgets, or even the large portions of food servings. With such a vast range of selections and choices of whatever our hearts could desire, we should be super happy and super satisfied. But instead, we have become super unhealthy, super agitated and super dissatisfied. Chronic health problems such as diabetes and depression are on the steady incline and the number of people reporting restlessness, insomnia, suicidal tendencies and a general dissatisfaction with their lives continues to increase.

While most of us long for peace regardless of which part of the world we come from, or which faith we belong to, is peace of mind even a realistic possibility these days? The more we yearn for peace, the harder it is to experience it. There are so many temptations, so many desires, so many possessions we must have. Should we give up all our loves and desires in order to find peace? Not so, because having no needs or desires would suggest that we are in the state of demise. Instead, the Holy Qur'an teaches us how to tame our desires. Rather than follow our desires blindly, we should make our desires follow us. Instead of worshipping our vain desires, we should make our desires subservient to our ultimate goals in life.

An example of egotistical desires is mentioned in the Holy Quran, "...O ye who believe! Let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah." (63:10). While children and wealth are no doubt meant to be a source of blessings from God, they can also become a distraction when they become measures of worldly success and achievements. Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was concerned that his people would become worldly and get distant from the truth. "I am

**Most of us would define peace of mind as a feeling of serenity, tranquility, contentment, or simply the absence of mental stress or anxiety. However, based on the increasing number of natural disasters, senseless violence and poverty, it appears that the more we search for peace, the more it escapes us as we try to extricate ourselves from the daily grind of work and stressors, not to mention external factors that dominate our lives and emotions.**



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**The Quran declares that God is *As-Salam, the Source of Peace* (59:24), and we are enjoined to greet each other with “*As-Salaamu ‘Alaikum*,” which means, “Peace be upon you.” The frequent repetition of this phrase is an external demonstration of desiring peace for oneself and for others. And through this greeting, Islam inculcates a feeling of peace in the hearts of those who greet as well as those who are greeted, “*Wa Alaikumus-Salaam!*” “And peace be upon you too.”**

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afraid that worldly wealth will be given to you in abundance as it was given to those (nations) before you, and you will start competing with each other for it as the previous nations competed for it, and then it will divert you (from good) as it diverted them” (*Sahih Bukhari*). The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> wrote that the less a person is occupied with worldly struggles, the more satisfied and fulfilled he will become.

The teachings of Islam are intended to create peace regardless of whether it is at an individual, communal, national or global level. The Quran declares that God is *As-Salam, the Source of Peace* (59:24), and we are enjoined to greet each other with “*As-Salaamu ‘Alaikum*,” which means, “Peace be upon you.” The frequent repetition of this phrase is an external demonstration of desiring peace for oneself and for others. And through this greeting, Islam inculcates a feeling of peace in the hearts of those who greet as well as those who are greeted, “*Wa Alaikumus-Salaam!*” “And peace be upon you too.”

In several places in the Quran, the promise of reward is synonymous with the promise of inner peace. Inner peace is dependent on the type of relationship we develop with God. The Holy Quran states, “*Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find peace*” (13:29). Prophet Muhammad said, “There is a polish for everything that takes away rust; and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of God” (*Bukhari*). Secondly, we must place our complete trust in God, “*In Him do I put my trust and to Him do I return*” (13:31) and “*Is not God sufficient for His servant*” (39:37). Prophet Muhammad said, “If you put your whole trust in God, as you ought to, He most certainly will satisfy your needs, as He satisfies those of the birds. They come out hungry in the morning, but return full to their nests” (*Tirmidhi*). Finally, we are instructed to perform righteous deeds, “*Those who believe*

*and do good works – happiness is decreed for them and an excellent place of return for them*” (13:30). The Promised Messiah said, “The highest desire of man is to achieve solace and comfort in this world. And the only path to it is through the path of righteousness.”

One of the important building blocks of inner peace is contentment because the richest person is not one who has the most, but one who is most content with what he has. Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> said, “True richness is not through property and belongings but true richness is in self-contentment” (*Bukhari*). On one occasion, Hadrat ‘Umar<sup>ra</sup> said to Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, “O Messenger of God! While kings sleep in soft, feather beds, you are lying on a rough mat. You are the Messenger of God and thereby deserve more than any other people to live an easy life.” Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was reported to have replied, “Do you not agree that the luxuries of the world should be theirs but those of the Hereafter ours” (*Bukhari*)? Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> also said, “Simplicity in life is part of Faith” (*Abu Dawud*).

Peace of mind can be likened to the laws of nature established by God. If nature is not disrupted by artificial means or by corruption and greed, it will continue to stay its natural and peaceful course. Similarly, inner peace and contentment can be achieved through love for our Creator and His Creation, and by a conscious effort to eliminate corruption, injustice, selfishness and greed. The Quran states, “And create not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order” (7:57). Thus, we have the choice to adopt or reject the path of peace of our own free will. The Quran clearly explains this freedom of choice and its consequences, “He who follows the right way follows it only for the good of his own soul; and he who goes astray, goes astray only to his own loss” (17:16).

Experiencing peace of mind is not a static event; it is a dynamic process, a continuous

journey of reflections, choices and effort as we advance through different stages in our physical, moral and spiritual development. In the early stages, we are consumed with aggression, greed and competitiveness, allowing our primitive desires to get ahead of us, wanting more than we need. Then, through a stage of moral maturity, we begin to grasp the true purpose of our lives, “And the life of this world is nothing but a past-time and a sport, and the home of the hereafter is the only true life, if they but knew” (29:65). This moral consciousness controls our selfish desires and we begin to detach ourselves from the possessions that had enslaved us previously, drawing us closer to God, “And whatever you have been given is only a temporary provision of this life, but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord” (42:37). Finally, in accepting bondage to our Creator, we cast-off the shackles of this world and begin our journey towards peace. This is referred to in the Quran as the stage of the “Soul at Peace” (89:28).

Peace of mind comes from trusting that God will take care of us and provide for us as needed. Prophet Moses<sup>as</sup> put his trust in God when he prayed, “My Lord, I am in need of whatever good Thou mayest send down to me” (28:25). Peace of mind comes from holding on more tightly to the rope of God, so that our grip on the ropes of desire, greed, temptation and competition become weaker. When we consciously work towards these goals and begin to experience God, we begin to experience true peace, the bedrock on which all moral and spiritual progress depends. The concept of peace (*salaam*) as explained in Islam sums up all the blessings of this world and the next, Peace with God and peace with oneself, peace of mind, body and soul. May we be those fortunate people who will be “Greeted with Peace, a word of greeting from the Merciful Lord” (36:59). ♦



# Peace Through the System of Khilafat

By Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL.B.

**The comprehensive task to establish universal peace as initiated by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> covered all phases of life, and his mission continued by his successors through the system of Khilafat. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> passed away in 1908 and his most learned and virtuous follower, Hadhrat Maulwi Nur-ud-Din<sup>ra</sup>, was elected as his first Khalifa or successor to carry on his work.**

**A**fter he accepted the responsibility of the *Khilafat*, in his very first address to the community he said, “Remember, all good proceeds from peace.” He most diligently continued to infuse mutual love among members of the Ahmadiyya Community, teaching them to cooperate with each other in promoting peace, harmony and selfless service. He gave great emphasis on establishing a firm relationship with God through enhancing the standards of worship. He knew that the task of propagating Islam was not easy, as the Muslims of the world were beset with internal dissensions and differences. To remove those conflicts and discords was an important function of the *Khilafat*. Throughout his tenure as the *Khalifa* of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, he endured hard to discharge the obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil to establish peace in society.

The basis of peace in society is firmly rooted in internal peace – the contentment of hearts. Hadhrat Maulwi Nur-ud-Din<sup>ra</sup> and the

succeeding *Khalifas*, without any exception, have set their personal examples of internal and spiritual peace. They led the community being paramount models of piety and remaining engaged in worship of Allah. Their time was occupied in supplications, remembrance of Allah and service to mankind. Through their speeches, addresses and Friday sermons they expounded the importance of having contentment of heart, and not running after transitory joys of material luxuries. They instilled in the hearts of their followers full trust in God’s friendship, and lasting joy of having His love and mercy. Under their guidance, the members of the Ahmadiyya Community learnt how to remain patient and steadfast under all kinds of persecutions and atrocities inflicted on them by their opponents.

The second *Khalifa* of the Messiah<sup>as</sup>, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> led the community on the path of peace for 52 years. He established an administrative department for the moral training



## The slogan “Love for All, Hatred for None” given by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III<sup>rh</sup> is fully demonstrated not only inside the Ahmadiyya mosques, but in all activities offering selfless services to mankind.

of his followers that constantly looked after the moral and spiritual issues, and exerted to maintain internal peace and harmony among members and Ahmadi families. To remove any possibility of discord, this department played a proactive role at local and national levels. Later on, Reformatory Committees were established as a part of the system of the *Khilafat*, and their assigned task was to resolve domestic and communal issues and to bring lasting reconciliation among members of the community.

Several times there were extreme tensions among various faith communities in India, especially between Hindus and Muslims. On publications of insensitive books or articles against religious leaders, conflicts took place resulting in communal riots and bloodshed. For instance, in the late 1920s a Hindu by the name of Rajpal, who was a member of the Arya Samaj, wrote an outrageous and most insulting book entitled *Rangila Rasul* (The Rakish Messenger) about the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> of Islam. This scandalous book provoked scorn and hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims. The then British Indian Government took action against Rajpal, initially sentencing him to jail, but his conviction was later dismissed by the High Court. Rajpal's acquittal caused a tremendous grief and uncontrollable anger among the Muslims, and consequently a Muslim named Ilm Din killed Rajpal. The Muslim assassinator was tried for murder and sentenced to death, and that caused further grief among the Muslims.

The Muslim outrage was hardly subsided when another offensive article was published by a Hindu journal called *Vartman*. To reduce such extreme religious tensions, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II<sup>ra</sup> proposed that, first of all, the law regarding such offensive publications needed an amendment, but more importantly there was a need among the Muslims to impart information to non-Muslims in effective and constructed ways to remove their misunderstandings about the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> of Islam by presenting his magnificent life and beautiful character. To achieve his proposed goal, a special issue of the Ahmadiyya publication *Al-Fazal* was

published on 12 June 1927. Moreover, he initiated regular countywide meetings on the *Seerah* (the life and character) of the Prophet<sup>saw</sup>, and since then such meetings are continuously being held. In addition, to promote interfaith understanding, mutual love and respect, he started observance of an annual *Religious Founders Day*. This was a major step taken by the *Khalifa* of the time to establish peace among diversified faith communities.

Building of mosques all over the world is an essential and continuous project through the system of *Khilafat*. The Ahmadiyya mosques are open to all, and visitors are encouraged for better understanding of Islam and its practices. Non-Muslims are invited to socialize with Ahmadi Muslims and to understand the system of *Khilafat*. Many interfaith dialogues and religious lectures take place in the mosques. Non-Muslim speakers are free to express their thoughts in the mosque to promote peace and harmony.

The slogan “Love for All, Hatred for None” given by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III<sup>rh</sup> is fully demonstrated not only inside the Ahmadiyya mosques, but in all activities offering selfless services to mankind. In the system of *Khilafat*, there is a permanent and very active department of Social Services that renders services to mankind at local, national and international levels. In addition, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV<sup>th</sup> established an International aid and non-profit charitable organization called *Humanity First* in 1994 to relieve human suffering caused by natural disasters, poverty and wars, and to promote peace and understanding around the world based upon mutual tolerance and respect. This organization includes the efforts of countless volunteers that include physicians, nurses, engineers, teachers and technical staff. It provides help on need basis, irrespective of ethnicity, religion or political alliances. It provides humanitarian aid, medical relief, shelter, food and clean water. Moreover, it works with the afflicted communities to train them in self-help and sustainable future growth. This work includes providing help for primary education

for children and vocational training for adults. *Humanity First* has provided valuable help to eliminate the disastrous effects of the Kosovo war, the Asian Tsunami, earthquakes in Japan, India, Pakistan, Peru, Indonesia and Haiti.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community distinguishes itself by promoting non-violence and rejecting terrorism in all its forms, and particularly the use of force in matters of religion. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> took pains to fully elaborate the true concept of *Jihad* in Islam, and made it clear that the so-called *Jihad* with sword was not required in this age as the enemies of Islam were waging an intellectual propaganda, and not a physical war against Islam. The Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* continues to defend Islam with the use of the pen, and it prevents the use of destructive weapons of war in the name of Islam. For political stability of a country, use of violence either by the people in power or by their constituents is forcefully criticized, and all the Ahmadi *Khalifas* have been admonishing the Muslims to use lawful methods to bring about any political change. Loyalty to the country of one's residence is an essential Islamic trait, and the Ahmadi *Khalifas* have always instructed to remain devoted and loyal to their countries. The governing authority should be deemed as trust to be given to the most capable persons, and all administrative matters need to be decided by mutual consultative process called *Mushawarat*.

During international critical times, the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat* has always forewarned the Heads of States to take necessary steps to avert possibility of a war. Recently, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aba</sup> advised the political leaders of USA, Britain, Israel and Iran to take concrete steps to avoid a nuclear war in the Middle East. Thus, the *Khilafat* system is fully engaged in a continuous process of maintaining peace in the world. All the *Khalifas* have most diligently implemented the essential instructions of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> that no harm whatsoever should be done to anyone under the impulses of anger and revenge, and that we should keep ourselves occupied to serve humanity by the best of our God-given abilities and powers. ♦



*I guarantee a home within the boundary of Paradise for one who will give up showing off, even if he is in the right; and a home in the middle of Paradise for one who will give up lying even in fun; and a home on the height of Paradise for one whose behavior is excellent.*

*(Abu Daud)*

# Harmonizing Religion and Science

## The Promised Messiah's role as Dhul-Qarnain

By Naser-ud-Din Shams

### Introduction

**T**he Ahmadiyya Muslim Community views religion and science as two faces of the same coin. Since each is an expression of truth, they must always be in agreement. If they're not, it's because we are viewing only one side of the coin.

Traditional religious explanations find it difficult to reconcile the phenomena of miracles with "God-less" scientific observations. On the other hand, a scientifically dominated age, such as the one we live in, finds traditional religious views in denial of obvious facts. Both sides point to the other as living in the darkness of ignorance. Harmonizing religion and science demands Divine insight – an insight which was bestowed upon Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>AS</sup>, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, as he fulfilled his role as *Dhul-Qarnain*, the two-horned Ram of Daniel's dream.

### Age of Antiquity

Since antiquity, religious clergy have wrestled rational thinkers. When confronted with the intimidating questions of *How?* and *Why?*, the clergy were quick to reply with the convenient "God can do anything He pleases."

It has always been the clergy's *get out of jail card*. Unfortunately, unsatisfied worshippers took this reply to be a *get out of church card* as they exited their Faiths and moved one step closer to agnosticism or atheism. In this way the clergy, who were supposed to strengthen the believers, weakened their congregations by promoting ignorance.

Questioning was forbidden, lest it expose the clergy's own ignorance. Eventually, matters culminated in blasphemy laws: the greatest testament to clergy incompetence. Among the many methods of creatively murdering "blasphemers" out of the "love of God," hundreds of thousands were burned at the stake, hung, or drowned. It was a hypocrite's paradise.



*Galileo facing the Roman Inquisition, painting by Cristiano Banti*

### Age of Innovation

Of the lesser punishments were excommunication and banishment. This happened in the case of Galileo Galilei (1564 to 1642AD), the Italian philosopher, physicist and astronomer. He was condemned for his heliocentric views, which were deemed contrary to the Biblical perspective of a geocentric universe, held by the clergy. Galileo was tried in 1633 and condemned as a suspected heretic. He was sentenced to house arrest and his book, "Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems," was banned.

Over 350 years later, in 1992, in a rare admission by the Vatican, Pope John Paul II apologized for the Catholic Church's condemnation of Galileo and admitted he was right all along.

Several centuries of such condemnations and brutal executions drove Christian Europe into doubt and darkness. As scientific advancements increased, Christian beliefs dwindled into nothing more than emotionally driven blind faith, all the while challenged by many a new scientist.

The age of innovation marched on with increasing automation, technology and understanding; and as it did, sin grew increasingly popular. Europeans found science and worldly pleasures more worthy than belief in a god who refuses to allow humans to use the very minds he gave them.

### Islam and Science

Contrary to the attitude of the Christian clergy, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>SA</sup> encouraged all Muslims to seek knowledge. He said, "Whoever seeks a way to acquire knowledge, Allah will make his way to Paradise easy" [Sahih Muslim].

In addition, he said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim" [Sunan ibn Majah].

The Holy Prophet<sup>SA</sup> warned Muslims to beware of the Latter Days when they would share the same fate of the ignorant Christian clergymen: "From among the signs of the Hour are the following: religious knowledge will be taken away; general ignorance will increase; illicit sexual immorality will prevail;



drinking of alcohol will become widespread. Men will decrease in number, and women will increase, so much so that fifty women will be looked after by one man” [Sahih Bukhari].

This is a time when Muslim clerics take exceptional pride in their cowardice. They hide behind blasphemy laws and dodge the debates that would expose their spiritual ineptitude.

## Dhul Qarnain

It was during these times that the spiritual *Dhul Qarnain* would appear. *Dhul Qarnain* means the “two horned one,” and is metaphorically represented as the ram in the Prophet Daniel’s dream in the Bible [Daniel chapter 8]. However, there are several other connotations that we get from the Arabic etymology of the words. *Qarnain* can mean two horns, two centuries, two ages, two generations, or two peoples of a time.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community identifies *Dhul Qarnain* mentioned in the Holy Quran as Cyrus the Great. But the title *Dhul Qarnain* also prophetically represents the Promised Messiah<sup>AS</sup>. The two men share a great deal of similarities.

Cyrus was a Persian king under whose reign the exiled Israelites were allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> was also of Persian descent and was sent as the spiritual king of the Muslim *Ummah* to lead it out of darkness. For this reason he was given the title *Imam Mahdi*, or the *Righteously Guided Leader*. It was also under his spiritual reign that the Jews would return to the land of Palestine as was prophesied in the Holy Quran [17:105].

The Holy Quran details the expeditions of Cyrus the Great, but here are how the verses prophecy the spiritual *Dhul Qarnain*, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>AS</sup>:

[18:85] “We established him in the earth and gave him the means to accomplish everything.” *This means that Hadrat Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> was provided all material and spiritual necessities by Allah in preparation for the lofty missions he was to embark upon.*

[18:86 & 87] “Then he followed a way. Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a pool of murky water, and near it he found a people. We said, ‘O *Dhul Qarnain*, either punish them, or treat them with kindness.’” *This means that when Hadrat Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> would find the people of the*

*West (i.e., the setting of the sun), he would find them engrossed in a perverted belief system that was clouded with contradiction and obscurity. The sun of truth had set upon their world and they were living in darkness, and their spiritual water [i.e., revelation] was obscured with the mud of interpolations. This represents the Christian nations that excelled in science and innovation, but fell far behind in spiritual integrity. Hadrat Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> would fulfill his role as the Promised Messiah to these people to challenge their erroneous beliefs about the deity of Jesus Christ<sup>AS</sup>, but most would reject him.*

[18:90 & 91] “Then indeed he followed another way. Until, when he reached the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had made no shelter against it.” *This means that Hadrat Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> would find the people of the East (i.e., the rising of the sun), the Muslims, so ignorant of the light of Islam [i.e., the sun] that they indulged in extremism, following every little detail of the Shari’ah, but completely devoid of the beautiful spirit behind it. These people would eventually scorch themselves into spiritual suicide. To these people Hadrat Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> would fulfill his role as Imam Mahdi, but most would reject him.*

[18:93 to 96] “Then he followed another way. Until, when he reached the place between the two mountains, he found, beneath them, a people who would scarcely understand a word. They said, ‘O *Dhul Qarnain*, verily Gog and Magog are creating disorder in the earth; shall we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou set up a barrier between us and them?’ He replied, ‘The power with which my Lord has endowed me is better, but you may help me with physical strength, I will set up between you and them a rampart.’” *This means that a third group of humble people would accept Hadrat Ahmad<sup>AS</sup> and they would seek his protection against the onslaught of Gog and Magog (i.e. the Christian colonial powers). Although they offer him a tribute, the Promised Messiah would reject it. He would abolish jizya and fight his battles with prayers, patience and pens. He would build a barrier fortified by impregnable arguments and a community cemented by the love of God. Gog and Magog, and the Antichrist that would emanate therefrom (i.e. the Christian missionaries and the scientists), could not overcome it nor find any holes of weakness in it.*

## The Barrier

The wall built by the Promised Messiah<sup>AS</sup> would be covered in copper, which does not rust. In other words, his arguments that bonded men with God would be everlasting.

There was a new era dawning upon the history of the world. Modes of transportation, communication and warfare in the Age of Antiquity involved horses, cattle, messengers, swords and spears; but the invading Age of Innovation was threatening its extinction. Cavalry were replaced with tanks, messengers with telegraph, horses with trains, and spears with muskets. Two generations were in conflict. As this *Dhul Qarnain* would connect the Age of Antiquity with the Age of Innovation, he would need to lay the foundation to forever harmonize the miracles in scriptures with the irrefutable advancements of science.

In reconciling this apparent conflict, the Promised Messiah<sup>AS</sup> indicated that all miracles occur within the laws of nature, but are guided by the Hand of God. He wrote, “It is appropriate in this context to address the question that if everything is subject to the eternal laws, or is predetermined, then what is the significance of miracles? It is undoubtedly true that nothing lies outside the eternal laws or the eternal will of God and His decree, whether we are aware of it or not. ‘Whatever is going to happen has been written and the pen has dried.’ And yet the same Divine practice – also called the law of nature – has made certain things dependent upon others. Likewise, there are certain phenomena which the eternal will has made conditional upon the prayers of the holy ones, and the blessings of their holy breath, and upon their attention, their firm resolve and their glory, and has linked them to the entreaties and supplications of these people” [Surmah Chashm Aarya].

## Summary

The Latter Days were prophesied as a time of unprecedented turmoil, confusion and conflict. It would take a man of equal magnitude to bring the world peace, harmony and clarity. This man was Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>AS</sup>. As the Promised Messiah, the Imam Mahdi and *Dhul Qarnain*, he would guide people out of darkness and illuminate the intimidating invasion of science as nothing more than a further victory for its lifelong “enemy”: religion. ♦



# Questions & Answers

## What is the meaning of forbearance and forgiveness?

The first of these is forbearance or forgiveness. He who commits an offence against another causes him pain or harm and deserves to be punished either through the process of the law, with imprisonment or fine, or directly by the person offended. To forgive him, if forgiveness should be appropriate, would be to do him good. In this context the teaching of the Holy Quran is:

Those who control their tempers when they are roused and who overlook people's faults when that is appropriate (3:135). The recompense of an injury is a penalty in proportion thereto; but whose forgives and effects thereby a reform in the offender, and no harm is apprehended, that is to say, exercises forgiveness on its appropriate occasion, will have his reward with Allah (42:41).

This verse shows that the Quran does not teach non-resistance to evil on all occasions, or that mischief makers and wrongdoers should never be punished. Its teaching is that one must consider whether the occasion calls for forgiveness or punishment, and to adopt the course which would be best in the interests both of the offender and the public. Sometimes an offender turns away from wrongdoing in consequence of being forgiven, and sometimes forgiveness incites

him to further wrongdoing. Therefore, God Almighty directs that we should not develop the habit of forgiving blindly on all occasions, but should consider carefully whether forgiveness or punishment would be most appropriate, and, therefore, a virtue, in each particular case, and should adopt that course. Some people are so vindictive that they keep in mind the wrongs done to their fathers through generations, and there are others who carry forbearance and forgiveness to the extreme, sometimes even to the limit of shamelessness. They exercise such weakness, forgiveness and forbearance as are utterly inconsistent with dignity, honour, jealousy and chastity. Their conduct is a stain on good character and the result of their forgiveness and forbearance is that people are disgusted with them. That is why the Holy Quran attaches the condition of appropriate time and place for the exercise of every moral quality, and does not approve the exercise of a moral quality out of its place.

## How are equity, benevolence and graciousness related to each other in three stages?

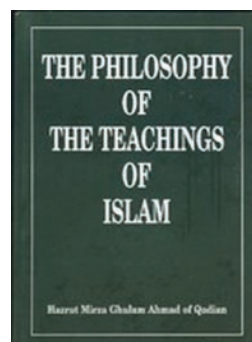
The first is the doing of good in return for good. This is the lowest gradation and even an average person can easily acquire this gradation that he should do good to those who do good to him.

The second gradation is a little

more difficult than the first, and that is to take the initiative in doing good out of pure benevolence. This is the middle grade. Most people act benevolently towards the poor. But there is a hidden deficiency in benevolence, that the person exercising benevolence is conscious of it and desires gratitude or prayer in return for his benevolence.

The third grade of doing is graciousness as between kindred. God Almighty directs that in this grade there should be no idea of benevolence or any desire for gratitude, but good should be done out of such eager sympathy as, for instance, a mother does good to her child. This is the highest grade of doing good which cannot be exceeded.

It should be remembered that equity or benevolence or graciousness between kindred is not in itself a moral quality. They are man's natural Conditions and faculties that are exhibited even by children before they develop their reason. Reason is a condition of the exercise of a moral quality and there is also a condition that every moral quality should be exercised in its proper place and on its proper occasion.



*For further discussion on these topics go to [Alis-lam.org](http://Alis-lam.org). Search under library for the book, "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam."*

# News, Views and Reviews

## When free speech costs human life

By Qasim Rashid

Washington Post Blog, 9.13.12

As with many of you, my Twitter feed spiked Wednesday with tweets about [an anti-Islam film](#) and ensuing murder of U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens. Moments later and likewise, posts demanding an unequivocal condemnation from American Muslims flooded my Facebook.

Though it astounds me that some hold Muslim Americans accountable on behalf of extremists 5,000 miles away, here goes. I can speak specifically on behalf of the [Ahmadiyya Muslim Community](#) to condemn this senseless violence in the strongest terms. Likewise, I have seen only similar explicit condemnation from my colleagues in countless different Muslim communities worldwide. But this condemnation is not new. We condemned the post-Danish cartoon violence that resulted in dozens of deaths and countless more injuries in 2005. We condemned the post-Terry Jones Koran-burning violence that killed 31 in Afghanistan in 2010. And now we again condemn this senseless violence in 2012.

But if you haven't noticed a pattern, let me illustrate this sadistic re-run. First, anti-Islam propagandists create and promote anti-Islam propaganda under the guise of free speech—knowing it will incite extremists to violence. Second, extremists react to the propaganda, resulting in the deaths of innocent civilians including U.N. aid workers, American citizens, and what we often callously refer to as “collateral damage,”—i.e. innocent women and children. Third, anti-Islam propagandists sit safely in their abodes, thousands of miles away and innocently shrug, “Too bad. This offensive speech is my right.” Finally, Muslims worldwide are put on trial to again condemn the violence—failure to do so is perceived as implicit approval. Yet, Islam remains maligned and, most importantly, innocent people continue to suffer.

To think this vicious cycle can stop simply if extremists stop being extremists is an extreme view itself.

At this juncture, anti-Islam propagandists typically claim that, “only Muslims are extremists.” This view is entirely ignorant. Former President John F. Kennedy needed to issue an executive order to protect southern



*First, anti-Islam propagandists create and promote anti-Islam propaganda under the guise of free speech—knowing it will incite extremists to violence. Second, extremists react to the propaganda, resulting in the deaths of innocent civilians including U.N. aid workers, American citizens, and what we often callously refer to as “collateral damage.”*

Black churches from KKK terrorism in the 1960s. The Sri Lankan government used force to stop the Hindu-Secularist Tamil Tigers from spreading suicide terrorism ideology in the 1980s and 1990s. Just last month, the [American Atheists group removed their own billboards](#) prior to the Republican National Convention and Democratic National Convention due to a “large volume” of “vitriol, threats, and hate speech” from Christians. Extremism has no religion.

But to be sure, in comparing a video insulting Prophet Muhammad to Muslims responding violently to said video—the bigger insult to the prophet, and the bigger atrocity to humanity, is the latter. The Koran repeatedly and specifically instructs Muslims to simply “turn away” when non-Muslims insult their faith or prophets. The Koran further restricts Muslims from insulting non-Muslims, instead

imploping Muslims to “argue in the way that is best” and with “absolute justice.”

Prophet Muhammad’s example demonstrates this point. When Meccan miscreants threw camel entrails on his back while he prayed, he forbade any offending retort and prescribed no punishment. When the woman who mutilated his uncle’s corpse asked for his forgiveness, he granted it. And the ignorant person who baselessly accused his wife of infidelity—Prophet Muhammad forgave him too, even offering his funeral prayer.

Islam teaches that free speech is a valuable right—but not at the cost of the much higher value of and right to life. Stevens, no doubt, championed free speech and human life. But, because others valued their own right to speech more than they valued his right to live, Stevens—along with many others—has now lost both.



# News, Views and Reviews

## Catholics Then, Muslims Now

By Doug Saunders

Washington Post Blog

**T**he short, crude anti-Muslim video that sparked a wave of violent protests across the Middle East did not emerge from an obscure pocket of extremism; it is the latest in a string of anti-Muslim outbursts in the United States. In August, a mosque was burned down in Missouri and an acid bomb was thrown at an Islamic school in Illinois. The video's backers are part of a movement that has used the insecurity of the post-9/11 years to sow unfounded fears of a Muslim plot to take over the West.

Their message has spread from the obscurity of the Internet and the far right to the best seller lists, the mainstream media and Congress. For the first time in decades, it has become acceptable in some circles to declare that a specific religious minority can't be trusted.

During the Republican primaries, Muslims were accused of harboring plans for "stealth Shariah." A group of five Republican House members, led by Michele Bachmann, groundlessly accused two prominent Muslim federal officials of loyalty to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. Another Republican representative, Joe Walsh of Illinois, used a campaign rally to suggest that Muslims in the Chicago suburbs were plotting to commit terrorist attacks. In New York City, the police spied on thousands of Muslims for six years without producing any evidence that could lead to an investigation.

The view that members of a religious minority are not to be trusted — that they are predisposed to extremism, disloyalty and violence; resist assimilation; reproduce at alarming rates, and are theologically compelled to impose their backward religious laws on their adopted home — is not new. From the 19th century on, distrust, violence and, eventually, immigration restrictions were aimed at waves of Roman Catholic immigrants.

As late as 1950, 240,000 Americans bought copies of "American Freedom and Catholic Power," a New York Times best seller. Its author, Paul Blanshard, a former diplomat and editor at *The Nation*, made the case that Catholicism was an ideology of



conquest, and that its traditions constituted a form of "medieval authoritarianism that has no rightful place in the democratic American environment."

Catholics' high birthrates and educational self-segregation led Mr. Blanshard and others — including scholars, legislators and journalists — to warn of a "Catholic plan for America."

Many Americans shunned such views, but some liberals did not. Mr. Blanshard's book was endorsed by the likes of John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, and respected scholars like Seymour Martin Lipset, Reinhold Niebuhr and Sidney Hook debated Catholics' supposed propensity toward authoritarianism.

Then, as now, there seemed to be evidence supporting the charge. Majority-Catholic countries like Spain, Italy, Portugal and Austria, had fallen into fascism or extremism. Crime and educational failure were rife among the children of Catholic immigrants. In the years after World War I, Catholic radicals carried out a deadly wave of terrorist attacks in the United States.

These days, the same dark accusations are being leveled at American Muslims, many of whom are recent immigrants. And many otherwise reasonable Americans have greeted Muslims with fear and suspicion — in part because they came at a bad time. Their emigration to the United States, like that of many Catholics before them, has coincided with turmoil in their native countries and violence from a few extremists in their midst.

In the years after 9/11, anti-Muslim rhetoric simmered on blogs, YouTube videos and a stream of inflammatory best sellers. But not until Barack Obama's presidency was it allowed to erupt into prominent corners of mainstream politics. Mitt Romney, to his credit, has shunned notions of American Muslim disloyalty, but Republican political and media figures have tolerated or even advanced these hateful myths.

In reality, Muslim immigrants are a success story. They have high levels of educational attainment. Their birthrate is converging quickly with that of the general population. They are likely to ultimately make up less than 2 percent of the population, around the same share as Episcopalians and Jews.

The violent few among them are no more a product of Muslim values than 1920s anarchists were of Catholic values. Extremism is vanishingly rare among American Muslims, and loyalty to secular state institutions is high. The idea of a stealth takeover by Islamic believers is a delusion. So is the more moderate idea of a permanently alien and unassimilable "civilization" in America's midst.

American Muslims are falling victim to the same misunderstandings and fallacies that threatened earlier waves of non-Protestant immigrants. The last thing they need, as they work to become part of the mainstream, is a political movement devoted to portraying them as a menace. In an election year when both major parties have a Roman Catholic on the ticket, we should take care to make sure that history does not repeat itself.

*Doug Saunders, the European bureau chief for The Globe and Mail, is the author of "The Myth of the Muslim Tide: Do Immigrants Threaten the West?"*



**A** man went to his pastor and described the problems he was having in his life, and how he was suffering from everyday issues. He went into details of his issues with his wife, children and friends. Then he described the problems at his job, the conditions of the economy in the country and the political turmoil in the world. The man just wanted a peaceful life. He wanted a solution so he would not have to deal with all these worries and headaches. He asked the pastor where he could go to find peace. After all, being the pastor and a man of God, he should be able to guide him to a place of peace and tranquility.

The pastor responded by saying that he did know of a place where he could be at peace. He also said that if the man wanted, he could drive him there. So the pastor got him in his car and after a short drive stopped at a cemetery and said, "There you go...complete peace from all your afflictions."

We want to get away from our problems and wish for peace, happiness and describe our desire in many different ways. We really don't know what we want outside of an escape from the issues at hand. We want to be happy.

The fact is that happiness and sadness are a part of life. Existence of one is only the absence of the other. We cannot feel one without the other. A child is born and we are happy. A dear one departs from this world and we feel sadness. These conditions continue to exist in our lifetime while their duration maybe different among different individuals.

## The Pursuit of Happiness



There is no such thing as perpetual happiness or sorrow. What we can really wish for is contentment in our life. We can be content while we are happy or sad.

Our faith cannot help us with the feelings of happiness or sadness because they will occur as part of the course. However, it can help us in being content. We need to accept that whatever comes our way will pass and we are content with the will of God. No matter what happens, our relationship with God stays strong.

The Holy Qur'an says that the contentment or comfort of heart comes through the remembrance of God (13:29). There is no other way to get those feelings of contentment unless we are in His company and conscious of His existence.

Some of us think that money will make us happy. Even if it does, it is temporary.

Just like any feeling of sadness, it will pass. Young actors and musicians who became millionaires overnight and then overdosed on drugs bear testimony to this fact. Their imagined happiness did not last long. There was no contentment in their hearts because money cannot provide it.

Contentment also comes from doing good works that God has commanded us to do. When we help a fellow being in need, our heart feels contentment. Those feelings of contentment stay with us. Unlike happiness, these feelings are permanent and cross over to the next world and become our reward. On the other hand, when we do something just for our own individual happiness and enjoyment, it is a temporary phase. In some cases if the happiness is a result of a sinful activity, it may turn into sadness. It depends on our consciousness and our knowledge of the laws of God.

Contentment of heart is the peace we are looking for. Blaming God for sadness in our life destroys peace in our life. Why do I always get the red light when I am driving and have to stop? Why can't it be green all the way? Why do so many people have no problems with their jobs but I struggle? Why couldn't I be the lottery winner? Why should I not be the one on the beach with no worries?

All these questions are raised in our minds so we can feel sorry for ourselves. They have no solutions and only corrupt our minds and make us discontent with our lives. All these worldly issues will disappear when we arrive at our destined time at the cemetery, just like the pastor pointed out.

Instead of worrying about the little stuff, we need to figure out how to give a helping hand to a poor friend, a widow or an orphan who needs help. We need to reach out to family and friends and provide support and give thanks to God that we are conscious of His existence. We need to acknowledge that He would be there for us while we are happy or sad.

Everlasting contentment and peace is in His company and friendship. ♦

**Falahud Din Shams**

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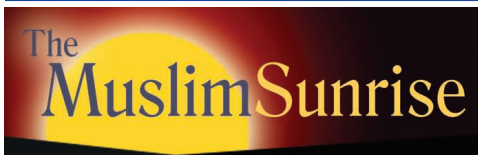


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